

"AMADEUS"

by

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Final Draft

INT. STAIRCASE OUTSIDE OLD SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT - 1823

Total darkness. We hear an old man's voice, distinct and in distress. It is OLD SALIERI. He uses a mixture of English and occasionally Italian.

OLD SALIERI

Mozart! Mozart! Mozart. Forgive me!

Forgive your assassin! Mozart!

A faint light illuminates the screen. Flickeringly, we see an eighteenth century balustrade and a flight of stone stairs. We are looking down into the wall of the staircase from the point of view of the landing. Up the stair is coming a branched candlestick held by Salieri's VALET. By his side is Salieri's COOK, bearing a large dish of sugared cakes and biscuits. Both men are desperately worried: the Valet is thin and middle-aged; the Cook, plump and Italian. It is very cold. They wear shawls over their night-dresses and clogs on their feet. They wheeze as they climb. The candles throw their shadows up onto the peeling walls of the house, which is evidently an old one and in bad decay. A cat scuttles swiftly between their bare legs, as they reach the salon door.

The Valet tries the handle. It is locked. Behind it the voice goes on, rising in volume.

OLD SALIERI

Show some mercy! I beg you. I beg you! Show mercy to a guilty man!

The Valet knocks gently on the door. The voice stops.

VALET

Open the door, Signore! Please! Be good now! We've brought you something special. Something you're going to love.

Silence.

VALET

Signore Salieri! Open the door. Come now. Be good!

The voice of Old Salieri continues again, further off now, and louder. We hear a noise as if a window is being opened.

OLD SALIERI

Mozart! Mozart! I confess it! Listen! I confess!

The two servants look at each other in alarm. Then the Valet hands the candlestick to the Cook and takes a sugared cake from the dish, scrambling as quickly as he can back down the stairs.

EXT. THE STREET OUTSIDE SALIERI'S HOUSE - VIENNA - NIGHT

The street is filled with people: ten cabs with drivers, five children, fifteen adults, two doormen, fifteen dancing couples and a sled and three dogs. It is a windy night. Snow is falling and whirling about. People are passing on foot, holding their cloaks tightly around them. Some of them are revelers in fancy dress: they wear masks on their faces or hanging around their necks, as if returning from parties. Now they are glancing up at the facade of the old house. The window above the street is open and Old Salieri stands there calling to the sky: a sharp-featured, white-haired Italian over seventy years old, wearing a stained dressing gown.

OLD SALIERI

Mozart! Mozart! I cannot bear it any longer! I confess! I confess what I did! I'm guilty! I killed you! Sir I confess! I killed you!

The door of the house bursts open. The Valet hobbles out, holding the sugared cake. The wind catches at his shawl.

OLD SALIERI

Mozart, perdonami! Forgive your assassin! Piet^! Piet^! Forgive your assassin! Forgive me! Forgive! Forgive!

VALET

(looking up to the window)

That's all right, Signore! He heard you! He forgave you! He wants you to go inside now and shut the window!

Old Salieri stares down at him. Some of the passersby have now stopped and are watching this spectacle.

VALET

Come on, Signore! Look what I have for you! I can't give it to you from down here, can I?

Old Salieri looks at him in contempt. Then he turns away back into the room, shutting the window with a bang. Through the glass, the old man stares down at the group of onlookers in the street. They stare back at him in confusion.

BYSTANDER

Who is that?

VALET

No one, sir. He'll be all right. Poor man. He's a little unhappy, you know.

He makes a sign indicating 'crazy,' and goes back inside the house. The onlookers keep staring.

CUT TO:

INT. LANDING OUTSIDE OLD SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT

The Cook is standing holding the candlestick in one hand, the dish of cakes in the other. The Valet arrives, panting.

VALET

Did he open?

The Cook, scared, shakes his head: no. The Valet again knocks on the door.

VALET

Here I am, Signore. Now open the door.

He eats the sugared cake in his hand, elaborately and noisily.

VALET

Mmmm - this is good! This is the most delicious thing I ever ate, believe me! Signore, you don't know what you're missing! Mmmm!

We hear a thump from inside the bedroom.

VALET

Now that's enough, Signore! Open!

We hear a terrible, throaty groaning.

VALET

If you don't open this door, we're going to eat everything. There'll be nothing left for you. And I'm not going to bring you anything more.

He looks down. From under the door we see a trickle of blood flowing. In horror, the two men stare at it. The dish of cakes falls from the Cook's hand and shatters.

He sets the candlestick down on the floor. Both servants run at the door frantically - once, twice, three times - and the frail lock gives. The door flies open.

Immediately, the stormy, frenzied opening of Mozart's Symphony No. 25 (the Little G Minor) begins. We see what the servants see.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT

Old Salieri lies on the floor in a pool of blood, an open razor in his hand. He has cut his throat but is still alive. He gestures at them. They run to him. Barely, we glimpse the room - an old chair, old tables piled with books, a forte-piano, a chamber-pot on the floor - as the Valet and the Cook struggle to lift their old Master, and bind his bleeding throat with a napkin.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

Twenty-five dancing couples, fifty guests, ten servants, full orchestra.

As the music slows a little, we see a Masquerade Ball in progress. A crowded room of dancers is executing the slow portion of a dance fashionable in the early 1820's.

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE SALIERI'S HOUSE - NIGHT

As the fast music returns, we see Old Salieri being carried out of his house on a stretcher by two attendants, and placed in a horse-drawn wagon under the supervision of a middle-aged doctor in a tall hat. This is DOCTOR GULDEN. He gets in beside his patient. The driver whips up the horse, and the wagon dashes off through the still-falling snow.

MONTAGE:

EXT. FOUR STREETS OF VIENNA AND

INT. THE WAGON - NIGHT

The wagon is galloping through the snowy streets of the city. Inside the conveyance we see Old Salieri wrapped in blankets, half-conscious, being held by the hospital attendants. Doctor Gulden stares at him grimly. The wagon arrives outside the General Hospital of Vienna.

CUT TO:

INT. A HOSPITAL CORRIDOR - LATE AFTERNOON

A wide, white-washed corridor. Doctor Gulden is walking down it with a priest, a man of about forty, concerned, but somewhat self-important. This is Father VOGLER, Chaplain at the hospital. In the corridor as they walk, we note several patients -- some of them visibly disturbed mentally. All patients wear white linen smocks. Doctor Gulden wears a dark frock-coat; Vogler, a cassock.

DOCTOR GULDEN

He's going to live. It's much harder
to cut your throat than most people
imagine.

They stop outside a door.

DOCTOR GULDEN

Here we are. Do you wish me to come
in with you?

VOGLER

No, Doctor. Thank you.

Vogler nods and opens the door.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

A bare room - one of the best available in the General Hospital. It contains a bed, a table with candles, chairs, a small forte-piano of the early nineteenth century. As Vogler enters, Old Salieri is sitting in a wheel-chair, looking out the window. His back is to us. The priest closes the door quietly behind him.

VOGLER

Herr Salieri?

Old Salieri turns around to look at him. We see that his throat is bandaged expertly. He wears hospital garb, and over it the Civilian Medal and Chain with which we will later see the EMPEROR invest him.

OLD SALIERI

What do you want?

VOGLER

I am Father Vogler. I am a Chaplain here. I thought you might like to talk to someone.

OLD SALIERI

About what?

VOGLER

You tried to take your life. You do remember that, don't you?

OLD SALIERI

So?

VOGLER

In the sight of God that is a sin.

OLD SALIERI

What do you want?

VOGLER

Do you understand that you have sinned? Gravely.

OLD SALIERI

Leave me alone.

VOGLER

I cannot leave alone a soul in pain.

OLD SALIERI

Do you know who I am? You never heard of me, did you?

VOGLER

That makes no difference. All men are equal in God's eyes.

OLD SALIERI

Are they?

VOGLER

Offer me your confession. I can offer you God's forgiveness.

OLD SALIERI

I do not seek forgiveness.

VOGLER

My son, there is something dreadful on your soul. Unburden it to me. I'm here only for you. Please talk to me.

OLD SALIERI

How well are you trained in music?

VOGLER

I know a little. I studied it in my youth.

OLD SALIERI

Where?

VOGLER

Here in Vienna.

OLD SALIERI

Then you must know this.

He propels his wheelchair to the forte-piano, and plays an unrecognizable melody.

VOGLER

I can't say I do. What is it?

OLD SALIERI

I'm surprised you don't know. It was a very popular tune in its day. I wrote it. How about this?

He plays another tune.

OLD SALIERI

This one brought down the house when we played it first.

He plays it with growing enthusiasm.

CUT TO:

INT. THE STAGE OF AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

We see the pretty soprano KATHERINA CAVALIERI, now about twenty-four, dressed in an elaborate mythological Persian costume, singing on stage. She's near the end of a very florid aria by Salieri. The audience applauds wildly.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - 1823

OLD SALIERI

(taking his hands off
the keys)

Well?

VOGLER

I regret it is not too familiar.

OLD SALIERI

Can you recall no melody of mine? I was the most famous composer in Europe when you were still a boy. I wrote forty operas alone. What about this little thing?

Slyly he plays the opening measure of Mozart's Eine Kleine Nachtmusik. The priest nods, smiling suddenly, and hums a little with the music.

VOGLER

Oh, I know that! That's charming! I didn't know you wrote that.

OLD SALIERI
I didn't. That was Mozart. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. You know who that is?

VOGLER
Of course. The man you accuse yourself of killing.

OLD SALIERI
Ah - you've heard that?

VOGLER
All Vienna has heard that.

OLD SALIERI
(eagerly)
And do they believe it?

VOGLER
Is it true?

OLD SALIERI
Do you believe it?

VOGLER
Should I?

A very long pause. Salieri stares above the priest, seemingly lost in his own private world.

VOGLER
For God's sake, my son, if you have anything to confess, do it now! Give yourself some peace!

A further pause.

VOGLER
Do you hear me?

OLD SALIERI
He was murdered, Father! Mozart! Cruelly murdered.

Pause.

VOGLER
(almost whispering)
Yes? Did you do it?

Suddenly Old Salieri turns to him, a look of extreme innocence.

OLD SALIERI
He was my idol! I can't remember a time when I didn't know his name! When I was only fourteen he was already famous. Even in Legnago - the tiniest town in Italy - I knew of him.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SMALL TOWN SQUARE IN LOMBARDY, ITALY - DAY - 1780'S

There are twelve children and twenty adults in the square. We see the fourteen-year-old Salieri blindfolded, playing a game of Blindman's Bluff with other Italian children, running about in the bright sunshine and laughing.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

I was still playing childish games
when he was playing music for kings
and emperors. Even the Pope in Rome!

CUT TO:

INT. A SALON IN THE VATICAN - DAY - 1780'S

We see the six-year-old MOZART, also blindfolded, seated in a gilded chair on a pile of books, playing the harpsichord for the POPE and a suite of CARDINALS and other churchmen. Beside the little boy stands LEOPOLD, his father, smirking with pride.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

I admit I was jealous when I heard
the tales they told about him. Not
of the brilliant little prodigy
himself, but of his father, who had
taught him everything.

The piece finishes. Leopold lowers the lid of the harpsichord and lifts up his little son to stand on it. Mozart removes the blindfold to show a pale little face with staring eyes. Both father and son bow. A Papal Chamberlain presents Leopold with a gold snuff box whilst the cardinals decorously applaud. Over this scene Old Salieri speaks.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

My father did not care for music. He
wanted me only to be a merchant,
like himself. As anonymous as he
was. When I told how I wished I could
be like Mozart, he would say, Why?
Do you want to be a trained monkey?
Would you like me to drag you around
Europe doing tricks like a circus
freak? How could I tell him what
music meant to me?

CUT TO:

EXT. A COUNTRY CHURCH IN NORTH ITALY - DAY - 1780'S

Serene music of the Italian Baroque - Pergolesi's Stabat Mater - sung by a choir of boys with organ accompaniment. We see the outside of the 17th-century church sitting in the wide landscape of Lombardy: sunlit fields, a dusty, white road, poplar trees.

INT. THE CHURCH AT LEGNAGO - DAY - 1780'S

The music continues and swells. We see the twelve-year-old Salieri seated between his plump and placid parents in the congregation, listening in rapture. His father is a heavy-

looking, self-approving man, obviously indifferent to the music. A large and austere Christ on the cross hangs over the altar. Candles burn below his image.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

Even then a spray of sounded notes
could make me dizzy, almost to
falling.

The boy falls forward on his knees. So do his parents and the other members of the congregation. He stares up at Christ who stares back at him.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

Whilst my father prayed earnestly to
God to protect commerce, I would
offer up secretly the proudest prayer
a boy could think of. Lord, make me
a great composer! Let me celebrate
your glory through music - and be
celebrated myself! Make me famous
through the world, dear God! Make me
immortal! After I die let people
speak my name forever with love for
what I wrote! In return I vow I will
give you my chastity - my industry,
my deepest humility, every hour of
my life. And I will help my fellow
man all I can. Amen and amen!

The music swells to a crescendo. The candles flare. We see the Christ through the flames looking at the boy benignly.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

And do you know what happened? A
miracle!

INT. DINING ROOM IN THE SALIERI HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S

CU, a large cooked fish on a thick china plate. Camera pulls back to show the Salieri family at dinner. Father Salieri sits at the head of the table, a napkin tucked into his chin. Mother Salieri is serving the fish into portions and handing them round. Two maiden aunts are in attendance, wearing black, and of course the young boy. Father Salieri receives his plate of fish and starts to eat greedily. Suddenly there is a gasp - he starts to choke violently on a fish bone. All the women get up and crowd around him, thumping and pummeling him, but it is in vain. Father Salieri collapses.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - 1823

OLD SALIERI

Suddenly he was dead. Just like that!
And my life changed forever. My mother
said, Go. Study music if you really
want to. Off with you! And off I
went as quick as I could and never
saw Italy again. Of course, I knew
God had arranged it all; that was
obvious. One moment I was a frustrated
boy in an obscure little town. The
next I was here, in Vienna, city of
musicians, sixteen years old and
studying under Gluck! Gluck, Father.

Do you know who he was? The greatest composer of his time. And he loved me! That was the wonder. He taught me everything he knew. And when I was ready, introduced me personally to the Emperor! Emperor Joseph - the musical king! Within a few years I was his court composer. Wasn't that incredible? Imperial Composer to His Majesty! Actually the man had no ear at all, but what did it matter? He adored my music, that was enough. Night after night I sat right next to the Emperor of Austria, playing duets with him, correcting the royal sight-reading. Tell me, if you had been me, wouldn't you have thought God had accepted your vow? And believe me, I honoured it. I was a model of virtue. I kept my hands off women, worked hours every day teaching students, many of them for free, sitting on endless committees to help poor musicians - work and work and work, that was all my life. And it was wonderful! Everybody liked me. I liked myself. I was the most successful musician in Vienna. And the happiest. Till he came. Mozart.

CUT TO:

INT. THE ARCHBISHOP OF SALZBURG'S RESIDENCE - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

A grand room crowded with guests. A small group of Gypsy musicians is playing in the background. Thirteen members of the Archbishop's orchestra - all wind players, complete with 18th-century wind instruments: elaborate-looking bassoons, basset horns, etc. and wearing their employer's livery - are laying out music on stands at one end of the room. At the other end is a large gilded chair, bearing the arms of the ARCHBISHOP OF SALZBURG. A throng of people is standing, talking, and preparing to sit upon the rows of waiting chairs to hear a concert.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

One day he came to Vienna to play some of his music at the residence of his employer, the Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg. Eagerly I went there to seek him out. That night changed my life.

We see Salieri, age thirty-one, a neat, carefully turned-cut man in decent black clothes and clean white linen, walking through the crowd of guests. We follow him.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

As I went through the salon, I played a game with myself. This man had written his first concerto at the age of four; his first symphony at seven; a full-scale opera at twelve. Did it show? Is talent like that

written on the face?

We see shots of assorted young men staring back at Salieri as he moves through the crowd.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

Which one of them could he be?

Some of the men recognize Salieri and bow respectfully. Then suddenly a servant bearing a large tray of cakes and pastries stalks past. Instantly riveted by the sight of such delights, Salieri follows him out of the Grand Salon.

INT. A PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S

The servant marches along bearing his tray of pastries aloft. Salieri follows him.

The servant turns into:

INT. BUFFET ROOM IN THE PALACE - DAY - 1780'S

Salieri's POV: several tables, dressed to the floor with cloths are loaded with many plates of confectionery. It is, in fact, Salieri's idea of paradise! The servant puts his tray down on one of the tables and withdraws from the room.

INT. A PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S

Salieri turns away so as not to be noticed by the servant. As soon as the man disappears, Salieri sneaks into the buffet room.

INT. BUFFET ROOM IN THE PALACE - DAY - 1780'S

Salieri enters the room and looks about him cautiously. He is salivating with anticipation as he stares at the feast of sweet things. His attention is attracted in particular by a huge pile of dark chocolate balls arranged in the shape of a pineapple. He reaches out a hand to steal one of the balls, but at the same moment he hears giggling coming toward him. He ducks down behind the pastry table.

A girl - CONSTANZE - rushes into the room. She runs straight across it and hides herself behind one of the tables.

After a beat of total silence, MOZART runs into the room, stops, and looks around. He is age twenty-six, wearing a fine wig and a brilliant coat with the insignia of the Archbishop of Salzburg upon it. He is puzzled; Constanze has disappeared.

Baffled, he turns and is about to leave the room, when Constanze suddenly squeaks from under the cloth like a tiny mouse. Instantly Mozart drops to all fours and starts crawling across the floor, meowing and hissing like a naughty cat. Watched by an astonished Salieri, Mozart disappears under the cloth and obviously pounces upon Constanze. We hear a high-pitched giggle, which is going to characterize Mozart throughout the film.

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S

The throng is mostly seated. The musicians are in their places, holding their various exotic-looking wind instruments; the candles are all lit. A Majordomo appears and bangs his staff on the floor for attention. Immediately COLLOREDO, Prince-Archbishop of Salzburg enters. He is a small self-important figure of fifty in a wig, surmounted by a scarlet skullcap. He is followed by his Chamberlain, the Count ARCO. Everyone stands. The Archbishop goes to his throne and sits. His guests sit also. Arco gives the signal to start the music. Nothing happens. Instead, a wind musician gets up, approaches the Chamberlain and whispers in his ear. Arco in turn whispers to the Archbishop.

ARCO

Mozart is not here.

COLLOREDO

Where is he?

ARCO

They're looking for him, Your Grace.

INT. A PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S

Three servants are opening doors and looking into rooms going off the corridor.

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S

The guests are turning around and looking at the Archbishop. The musicians are watching. There is puzzlement and a murmur of comment. The Archbishop tightens his lip.

COLLOREDO

(to Arco)

We'll start without him.

INT. PALACE BUFFET ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart is on his knees before the tablecloth, which reaches to the floor. Under it is Constanze. We hear her giggling as he talks.

MOZART

Miaouw! Miaouw! Mouse-ouse? It's
Puss-wuss, fangs-wangs. Paws-claws.
Pounce-bounce!

He grabs her ankle. She screams. He pulls her out by her leg.

CONSTANZE

Stop it. Stop it!

They roll on the floor. He tickles her.

CONSTANZE

Stop it!

MOZART

I am! I am! I'm stopping it - slowly.
You see! Look, I've stopped. Now we
are going back.

He tries to drag her back under the table.

CONSTANZE

No! No! No!

MOZART

Yes! Back! Back! Listen - don't you know where you are?

CONSTANZE

Where?

MOZART

We are in the Residence of the Fartsbishop of Salzburg.

CONSTANZE

Fartsbishop!

She laughs delightedly, then addresses an imaginary Archbishop.

CONSTANZE

Your Grace, I've got something to tell you. I want to complain about this man.

MOZART

Go ahead, tell him. Tell them all. They won't understand you anyway.

CONSTANZE

Why not?

MOZART

Because here everything goes backwards. People walk backwards, dance backwards, sing backwards, and talk backwards.

CONSTANZE

That's stupid.

MOZART

Why? People fart backwards.

CONSTANZE

Do you think that's funny?

MOZART

Yes, I think it's brilliant. You've been doing it for years.

He gives a high pitched giggle.

CONSTANZE

Oh, ha, ha, ha.

MOZART

Sra-I'm-sick! Sra-I'm sick!

CONSTANZE

Yes, you are. You're very sick.

MOZART

No, no. Say it backwards, shit-wit.
Sra-I'm-sick Say it backwards!

CONSTANZE

(working it out)

Sra-I'm-sick. Sick - kiss I'm - my
Kiss my! Sra-I'm-sick - Kiss my arse!

MOZART

Em iram! Em iram!

CONSTANZE

No, I'm not playing this game.

MOZART

No, this is serious. Say it backwards.

CONSTANZE

No!

MOZART

Just say it - you'll see. It's very
serious. Em iram! Em iram!

CONSTANZE

Iram - marry Em - marry me! No, no!
You're a fiend. I'm not going to
marry a fiend. A dirty fiend at that.

MOZART

Ui-vol-i-tub!

CONSTANZE

Tub - but i-tub - but I vol - love
but I love ui - You. I love you!

The mood becomes suddenly softer. She kisses him. They
embrace. Then he spoils it.

MOZART

Tish-I'm tee. What's that?

CONSTANZE

What?

MOZART

Tish-I'm-tee.

CONSTANZE

Eat

MOZART

Yes.

CONSTANZE

Eat my - ah!

Shocked, she strikes at him. At the same moment the music
starts in the salon next door. We hear the opening of the
Serenade for Thirteen Wind Instruments, K.

MOZART

My music! They've started! They've
started without me!

He leaps up, disheveled and rumpled and runs out of the room.
Salieri watches in amazement and disgust.

CUT TO:

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S

The music is louder. Mozart hastens towards the Grand Salon
away from the buffet room, adjusting his dress as he goes.

INT. GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S

The opening of the Serenade is being tentatively conducted
by the leader of the wind-musicians. Guests turn around as
Mozart appears - bowing to the Archbishop - and walks with
an attempt at dignity to the dais where the wind band is
playing. The leader yields his place to the composer and
Mozart smoothly takes over conducting.

Constanze, deeply embarrassed, sneaks into the room and seats
herself at the back.

INT. PALACE BUFFET ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

The music fades down. Salieri stands shocked from his
inadvertent eavesdropping. After a second he moves almost in
a trance toward the door; the music dissolves.

INT. GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart is conducting the Adagio from his Serenade (K. 361),
guiding the thirteen wind instrumentalists. The squeezebox
opening of the movement begins. Salieri appears at the door
at the back of the salon. He stares in disbelief at Mozart.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

So that was he! That giggling, dirty-
minded creature I'd just seen crawling
on the floor. Mozart. The phenomenon
whose legend had haunted my youth.
Impossible.

The music swells up and Salieri listens to it with eyes closed -
amazed, transported - suddenly engulfed by the sound. Finally
it fades down and away and changes into applause. Salieri
opens his eyes.

The audience is clearly delighted. Mozart bows to them, also
delighted. Colloredo rises abruptly, and without looking at
Mozart or applauding and leaves the Salon. Count Arco
approaches the composer. Mozart turns to him, radiant.

ARCO

Follow me, please. The Archbishop
would like a word.

MOZART

Certainly!

He follows Arco out of the room, through a throng of admirers.

INT. ANOTHER PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart and Arco walk side by side. They pass Salieri who is

staring at Mozart in fascination. As they disappear, he steals toward the music stands, unable to help himself.

MOZART

Well, I think that went off remarkably well, don't you?

ARCO

Indeed.

MOZART

These Viennese certainly know good music when they hear it.

ARCO

His Grace is very angry with you.

MOZART

What do you mean?

They arrive at the door of Colloredo's private apartment.

ARCO

You are to come in here and ask his pardon.

Arco opens the door.

INT. ARCHBISHOP'S PRIVATE ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

The Archbishop is sitting, chatting to guests. Among them are several ladies. Arco approaches him obsequiously.

ARCO

Your Grace.

COLLOREDO

Ah, Mozart. Why?

MOZART

Why what, sir?

COLLOREDO

Why do I have to be humiliated in front of my guests by one of my own servants?

MOZART

Humiliated?

COLLOREDO

How much provocation am I to endure from you? The more license I allow you, the more you take.

The company watches this scene, deeply interested.

MOZART

If His Grace is not satisfied with me, he can dismiss me.

COLLOREDO

I wish you to return immediately to Salzburg. Your father is waiting for you there patiently. I will speak to

you further when I come.

MOZART

No, Your Grace! I mean with all humility, no. I would rather you dismissed me. It's obvious I don't satisfy.

COLLOREDO

Then try harder, Mozart. I have no intention of dismissing you. You will remain in my service and learn your place. Go now.

He extends his hand to be kissed. Mozart does it with a furious grace, then leaves the room. As he opens the door we see:

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY - 1780'S

A group of people who have attended the concert, among them Constanze, are standing outside the private apartment. At sight of the composer they break into sustained applause. Mozart is suddenly delighted. He throws the door wide open

so that the guests can see into the private apartment where the Archbishop sits - and he can see them. Colloredo is clearly discomfited by this reception of his employee. He smiles and bows uneasily, as they include him in the small ovation.

Mozart stands in the corridor, out of the Archbishop's line of sight, bowing and giggling, and encouraging the applause for the Archbishop with conducting gestures. Suddenly irritated, Colloredo signs to Arco, who steps forward and shuts the door, ending the applause.

INT. PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S

Salieri, in this vast room, is standing and looking at the full score of the Serenade. He turns the pages back to the slow movement. Instantly, we again hear its lyrical strains.

CU, Salieri, reading the score of the Adagio in helpless fascination. The music is played against his description of it.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

Extraordinary! On the page it looked nothing. The beginning simple, almost comic. Just a pulse - bassoons and basset horns - like a rusty squeezebox. Then suddenly - high above it - an oboe, a single note, hanging there unwavering, till a clarinet took over and sweetened it into a phrase of such delight! This was no composition by a performing monkey! This was a music I'd never heard. Filled with such longing, such unfulfillable longing, it had me trembling. It seemed to me that I was hearing a voice of God.

Suddenly the music snaps off. Mozart stands before him as he

lays down the score.

MOZART

Excuse me!

He takes the score, bows, and struts briskly out of the room. Salieri stares uncomprehendingly after the jaunty little figure.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

But why?

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

OLD SALIERI

Why? Would God choose an obscene child to be His instrument? It was not to be believed! This piece had to be an accident. It had to be!

INT. PALACE DINING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

At the table sits the EMPEROR JOSEPH II, eating his frugal dinner and sipping goat's milk. He is an intelligent, dapper man of forty, wearing a military uniform. Around him but standing, are his Chamberlain, JOHANN VON STRACK: stiff and highly correct. COUNT ORSINI-ROSENBERG: a corpulent man of sixty, highly conscious of his position as Director of the Opera. BARON VON SWIETEN, the Imperial Librarian: a grave but kindly and educated man in his mid-fifties. FIRST KAPELLMEISTER GIUSEPPE BONNO: very Italian, cringing and time-serving, aged about seventy. And Salieri, wearing decorous black, as usual.

At a side-table, two Imperial secretaries, using quill pens and inkstands, write down everything of importance that is said.

JOSEPH

How good is he, this Mozart?

VON SWIETEN

He's remarkable, Majesty. I heard an extraordinary serious opera of his last month. Idomeneo, King of Crete.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

That? A most tiresome piece. I heard it, too.

VON SWIETEN

Tiresome?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

A young man trying to impress beyond his abilities. Too much spice. Too many notes.

VON SWIETEN

Majesty, I thought it the most promising work I've heard in years.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. Well then, we should make some effort to acquire him. We could

use a good German composer in Vienna,
surely?

VON STRACK

I agree, Majesty, but I'm afraid
it's not possible. The young man is
still in the pay of the Archbishop.

JOSEPH

Very small pay, I imagine. I'm sure
he could be tempted with the right
offer. Say, an opera in German for
our National Theatre.

VON SWIETEN

Excellent, sire!

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

But not German, I beg your Majesty!
Italian is the proper language for
opera. All educated people agree on
that.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. What do you say, Chamberlain?

VON STRACK

In my opinion, it is time we had a
piece in our own language, sir. Plain
German. For plain people.

He looks defiantly at Orsini-Rosenberg.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. Kapellmeister?

BONNO

(Italian accent)

Majesty, I must agree with Herr
Dirretore. Opera is an Italian art,
solamente. German is - scusate - too
bruta for singing, too rough.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. Court Composer, what do you
say?

SALIERI

I think it is an interesting notion
to keep Mozart in Vienna, Majesty.
It should really infuriate the
Archbishop beyond measure - if that
is your Majesty's intention.

JOSEPH

You are cattivo, Court Composer.
(briskly, to Von Strack)
I want to meet this young man.
Chamberlain, arrange a pleasant
welcome for him.

VON STRACK

Yes, sir.

JOSEPH

Well. There it is.

INT. BEDROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1780'S

A somber room which serves both as a bedroom and a study. We see a four-poster bed. Also, a marble mantelpiece above which hangs a handsome cross in olivewood, bearing the figure of a severe Christ. Opposite this image sits Salieri at his desk, on which stands a pile of music paper, quill pens and ink. On one side of him is an open forte-piano on which he occasionally tries notes from the march he is composing, with some difficulty. He scratches notes out with his quill, and ruffles his hair - which we see without a powdered wig. There is a knock at the door.

SALIERI

Si.

A servant admits LORL, a young lower-class girl, who appears carrying a basket in which is a box covered with a napkin. She has just come from the baker's shop.

SALIERI

Ah! Here she comes. Fraulein Lorl,
good morning.

LORL

Good morning, sir.

SALIERI

What have you got for me today? Let
me see.

Greedily he unwraps the napkin and lifts the lid on the box.

SALIERI

Ah-ha! Siena macaroons - my
favourites. Give my best thanks to
the baker.

LORL

I will, sir.

He takes a biscuit and eats.

SALIERI

Thank you. Are you well today,
Fraulein Lorl?

LORL

Yes, thank you, sir.

SALIERI

Bene! Bene!

She gives a little curtsey, flattered and giggling and is shown out. Salieri turns back to his work, chewing. He plays through a complete line of the march. He smiles, pleased with the result.

SALIERI

Grazie, Signore.

He inclines his head to the Christ above the fireplace, and starts to play the whole march, including the phrase which

pleased him.

INT. A WIGMAKER'S SHOP - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

The march continues on the forte-piano as we see Mozart, seated in front of a mirror, wearing an extravagant wig. On either side of him stands a SALESMAN, one of them holding another wig, equally extravagant. Mozart takes off the first wig, to reveal his own blonde hair, of which he is extremely proud, and hands it back.

MOZART

And the other one?

The Salesman puts the second wig on his head. Mozart pulls a face of doubt in the mirror.

MOZART

And the other one?

He takes it off and the other Salesman replaces it with the first wig on his head.

MOZART

Oh, they're both so beautiful, I
can't decide. Why don't I have two
heads?

He giggles. The music stops.

INT. GRAND SALON - THE ROYAL PALACE - DAY - 1780'S

A door opens. We glimpse in the next room the Emperor Joseph bidding goodbye to a group of military officers standing around a table.

JOSEPH

Good, good, good.

He turns and comes into the salon, where another group awaits him. It consists of Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Bonno, Von Swieten and Salieri. The room contains several gilded chairs dotted about, and a forte-piano.

JOSEPH

Good morning, gentlemen.

All bow and say, Good morning, Your Majesty!

JOSEPH

(to Von Strack)

Well, what do you have for me today?

VON STRACK

Your Majesty, Herr Mozart -

JOSEPH

Yes, what about him?

VON STRACK

He's here.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. Well. There it is. Good.

SALIERI

Majesty, I hope you won't think it improper, but I have written a little March of Welcome in his honour.

He produces a paper.

JOSEPH

What a charming idea. May I see?

SALIERI

(handing it over)

It's just a trifle, of course.

JOSEPH

May I try it?

SALIERI

Majesty.

The Emperor goes to the instrument, sits and plays the first bars of it. Quite well.

JOSEPH

Delightful, Court Composer. Would you permit me to play it as he comes in?

SALIERI

You do me too much honour, Sire.

JOSEPH

Let's have some fun.

(to the waiting

Majordomo)

Bring in Herr Mozart, please. But slowly, slowly. I need a minute to practice.

The Majordomo bows and goes. The Emperor addresses himself to the march. He plays a wrong note.

SALIERI

A-flat, Majesty.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha!

INT. PALACE CORRIDOR - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

Taking his instructions literally, the Majordomo is marching very slowly toward the salon door. He is followed by a bewildered Mozart, dressed very stylishly and wearing one of the wigs from the perruquier.

INT. ROYAL PALACE GRAND SALON - DAY - 1780'S

Joseph finishes the march. The door opens.

MAJORDOMO

Herr Mozart.

Mozart comes in eagerly. Immediately the march begins, played by His Majesty. All the courtiers stand, listening with admiration. Joseph plays well, but applies himself fiercely

to the manuscript. Mozart, still bewildered, regards the scene, but does not seem to pay attention to the music itself. It finishes and all clap obsequiously.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG
Bravo, Your Majesty!

VON STRACK
Well done, Sire!

The Emperor rises, pleased with himself. He snatches the manuscript off the stand and holds it in his hand for the rest of the scene.

JOSEPH
Gentlemen, gentlemen, a little less enthusiasm, I beg you. Ah, Mozart.

He extends his hand. Mozart throws himself to his knees, and to Joseph's discomfort kisses the royal hand with fervour.

MOZART
Your Majesty!

JOSEPH
No, no, please! It is not a holy relic.
(raising Mozart up)
You know we have met already? In this very room. Perhaps you won't remember it, you were only six years old.

(to the others)
He was giving the most brilliant little concert here. As he got off the stool, he slipped and fell. My sister Antoinette helped him up herself, and do you know what he did? Jumped straight into her arms and said, Will you marry me, yes or no?

Embarrassed, Mozart bursts into a wild giggle. Joseph helps him out.

JOSEPH
You know all these gentlemen, I'm sure.

Von Strack and Bonno nod.

JOSEPH
The Baron Von Swieten.

VON SWIETEN
I'm a great admirer of yours, young man. Welcome.

MOZART
Oh, thank you.

JOSEPH
The Director of our Opera. Count Orsini-Rosenberg.

MOZART

(bowing excitedly)

Oh sir, yes! The honour is mine.
Absolutely.

Orsini-Rosenberg nods without enthusiasm.

JOSEPH

And here is our illustrious Court
Composer, Herr Salieri.

SALIERI

(taking his hand)

Finally! Such an immense joy. Diletto
straordinario!

MOZART

I know your work well, Signore. Do
you know I actually composed some
variations on a melody of yours?

SALIERI

Really?

MOZART

Mio caro Adone.

SALIERI

Ah!

MOZART

A funny little tune, but it yielded
some good things.

JOSEPH

And now he has returned the
compliment. Herr Salieri composed
that March of Welcome for you.

MOZART

(speaking expertly)

Really? Oh, grazie, Signore! Sono
commosso! E un onore per mo
eccezionale. Compositore brillante
e famosissimo!

He bows elaborately. Salieri inclines himself, dryly.

SALIERI

My pleasure.

JOSEPH

Well, there it is. Now to business.
Young man, we are going to commission
an opera from you. What do you say?

MOZART

Majesty!

JOSEPH

(to the courtiers)

Did we vote in the end for German or
Italian?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Well, actually, Sire, if you remember,
we did finally incline to Italian.

VON STRACK

Did we?

VON SWIETEN

I don't think it was really decided,
Director.

MOZART

Oh, German! German! Please let it be
German.

JOSEPH

Why so?

MOZART

Because I've already found the most
wonderful libretto!

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Oh? Have I seen it?

MOZART

I - I don't think you have, Herr
Director. Not yet. I mean, it's quite
n - Of course, I'll show it to you
immediately.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

I think you'd better.

JOSEPH

Well, what is it about? Tell us the
story.

MOZART

It's actually quite amusing, Majesty.
It's set - the whole thing is set
in a - in a -

He stops short with a little giggle.

JOSEPH

Yes, where?

MOZART

In a Pasha's Harem, Majesty. A
Seraglio.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

You mean in Turkey?

MOZART

Exactly.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Then why especially does it have to
be in German?

MOZART

Well not especially. It can be in Turkish, if you really want. I don't care.

He giggles again. Orsini-Rosenberg looks at him sourly.

VON SWIETEN

(kindly)

My dear fellow, the language is not finally the point. Do you really think that subject is quite appropriate for a national theatre?

MOZART

Why not? It's charming. I mean, I don't actually show concubines exposing their! their! It's not indecent!

(to Joseph)

It's highly moral, Majesty. It's full of proper German virtues. I swear it. Absolutely!

JOSEPH

Well, I'm glad to hear that.

SALIERI

Excuse me, Sire, but what do you think these could be? Being a foreigner, I would love to learn.

JOSEPH

Cattivo again, Court Composer. Well, tell him, Mozart. Name us a German virtue.

MOZART

Love, Sire!

SALIERI

Ah, love! Well of course in Italy we know nothing about that.

The Italian faction - Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno - laugh discreetly.

MOZART

No, I don't think you do. I mean watching Italian opera, all those male sopranos screeching. Stupid fat couples rolling their eyes about! That's not love - it's just rubbish.

An embarrassed pause. Bonno giggles in nervous amusement.

MOZART

Majesty, you choose the language. It will be my task to set it to the finest music ever offered a monarch.

Pause. Joseph is clearly pleased.

JOSEPH

Well, there it is. Let it be German.

He nods - he has wanted this result all the time. He turns and makes for the door. All bow. Then he becomes aware of the manuscript in his hand.

JOSEPH

Ah, this is yours.

Mozart does not take it.

MOZART

Keep it, Sire, if you want to. It is already here in my head.

JOSEPH

What? On one hearing only?

MOZART

I think so, Sire, yes.

Pause.

JOSEPH

Show me.

Mozart bows and hands the manuscript back to the Emperor. Then he goes to the forte-piano and seats himself. The others, except for Salieri, gather around the manuscript held by the King. Mozart plays the first half of the march with deadly accuracy.

MOZART

(to Salieri)

The rest is just the same, isn't it?

He plays the first half again but stops in the middle of a phrase, which he repeats dubiously.

MOZART

That really doesn't work, does it?

All the courtiers look at Salieri.

MOZART

Did you try this? Wouldn't it be just a little more -?

He plays another phrase.

MOZART

Or this - yes, this! Better.

He plays another phrase. Gradually, he alters the music so that it turns into the celebrated march to be used later in The Marriage of Figaro, Non Piu Andrai. He plays it with increasing abandon and virtuosity. Salieri watches with a fixed smile on his face. The court watches, astonished. He finishes in great glory, takes his hands off the keys with a gesture of triumph - and grins.

INT. BEDROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1780'S

We see the olivewood cross. Salieri is sitting at his desk, staring at it.

SALIERI

Grazie, Signore.

There is a knock at the door. He does not hear it, but sits on. Another knock, louder.

SALIERI

Yes?

Lorl comes in.

LORL

Madame Cavalieri is here for her lesson, sir.

SALIERI

Bene.

He gets up and enters:

INT. MUSIC ROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1780'S

KATHERINA CAVALIERI, a young, high-spirited soprano of twenty is waiting for him, dressed in a fashionable dress and wearing on her head an exotic turban of satin, with a feather. Lorl exits.

CAVALIERI

(curtseying to him)

Maestro.

SALIERI

Good morning.

CAVALIERI

(posing, in her turban)

Well? How do you like it? It's Turkish. My hairdresser tells me everything's going to be Turkish this year!

SALIERI

Really? What else did he tell you today? Give me some gossip.

CAVALIERI

Well, I heard you met Herr Mozart.

SALIERI

Oh? News travels fast in Vienna.

CAVALIERI

And he's been commissioned to write an opera. Is it true?

SALIERI

Yes.

CAVALIERI

Is there a part for me?

SALIERI

No.

CAVALIERI

How do you know?

SALIERI

Well even if there is, I don't think
you want to get involved with this
one.

CAVALIERI

Why not?

SALIERI

Well, do you know where it's set, my
dear?

CAVALIERI

Where?

SALIERI

In a harem.

CAVALIERI

What's that?

SALIERI

A brothel.

CAVALIERI

Oh!

SALIERI

A Turkish brothel.

CAVALIERI

Turkish? Oh, if it's Turkish, that's
different. I want to be in it.

SALIERI

My dear, it will hardly enhance your
reputation to be celebrated throughout
Vienna as a singing prostitute for a
Turk.

He seats himself at the forte-piano.

CAVALIERI

Oh. Well perhaps you could introduce
us anyway.

SALIERI

Perhaps.

He plays a chord. She sings a scale, expertly. He strikes
another chord. She starts another scale, then breaks off.

CAVALIERI

What does he look like?

SALIERI

You might be disappointed.

CAVALIERI

Why?

SALIERI

Looks and talent don't always go
together, Katherina.

CAVALIERI

(airily)

Looks don't concern me, Maestro.
Only talent interests a woman of
taste.

He strikes the chord again, firmly. Cavalieri sings her next scale, then another one, and another one, doing her exercises in earnest. As she hits a sustained high note the orchestral accompaniment in the middle of Martern Aller Arten from Il Seraglio comes in underneath and the music changes from exercises to the exceedingly florid aria.

We DISSOLVE on the singer's face, and she is suddenly not merely turbaned, but painted and dressed totally in a Turkish manner, and we are on:

INT. OPERA STAGE - VIENNA - 1780'S

The heroine of the opera (Cavalieri) is in full cry addressing the Pasha with scorn and defiance.

The house is full. Watching the performance - which is conducted by Mozart from the clavier in the midst of the orchestra - we note Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Bonno and Von Swieten, all grouped around the Emperor, in a box.

In another box we see an overdressed, middle-aged woman and three girls, one of whom is Constanze. This is the formidable MADAME WEBER and her three daughters, Constanze, JOSEFA and SOPHIE. All are enraptured by the spectacle and Madame Weber is especially enraptured by being there at all. Not so, Salieri, who sits in another box, coldly watching the stage.

Cavalieri is singing Martern aller Arten from the line Doch du bist entschlossen.

CAVALIERI

Since you are determined, Since you
are determined, Calmly, with no
ferment, Welcome - every pain and
woe. Bind me then - compel me! Bind
me then - compel me! Hurt me. Break
me! Kill me! At last I shall be freed
by death!

After a few moments of this showy aria, with the composer and the singer staring at each other - he conducting elaborately for her benefit, and she following his beat with rapturous eyes - the music fades, and Salieri speaks over it.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

There she was. I had no idea where
they met - or how - yet there she
stood on stage for all to see. Showing
off like the greedy songbird she
was. Ten minutes of ghastly scales
and arpeggios, whizzing up and down
like fireworks at a fairground.

Music up again for the last 30 bars of the aria.

CAVALIERI

(singing)

Be freed at last by death! Be freed
at last by death! At last I shall be
freed By! Death!

Before the orchestral coda ends, cut to:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

Through the window we see that night has fallen.

OLD SALIERI

Understand, I was in love with the
girl. Or at least in lust. I wasn't
a saint. It took me the most
tremendous effort to be faithful to
my vow. I swear to you I never laid
a finger on her. All the same, I
couldn't bear to think of anyone
else touching her - least of all the
Creature.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE OPERA HOUSE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S

The brilliant Turkish finale of Seraglio bursts over us.
All the cast is lined up on stage. Mozart is conducting with
happy excitement.

CAST OF SERAGLIO

(singing)

Pasha Selim May he Live forever!
Ever, ever, ever, ever! Honour to
his regal name! Honour to his regal
name! May his noble brow emblazon
Glory, fortune, joy and fame! Honour
be to Pasha Selim Honour to his regal
name! Honour to his regal name!

The curtains fall. Much applause. The Emperor claps vigorously
and - following his lead - so do the courtiers. The curtains
part. Mozart applauds the singers who applaud him back. He
skips up onto the stage amongst them. The curtains fall again
as they all bow. In the auditorium, the chandeliers descend,
filling it with light.

INT. OPERA HOUSE STAGE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S

The curtains are down, and an excited hubbub of singers in
costume surround Mozart and Cavalieri, all excited and
chattering. Suddenly a hush. The Emperor is seen approaching
from the wings, lit by flunkies holding candles. Von Strack,
Orsini-Rosenberg and Von Swieten, amongst others, follow
him. Also Salieri. The singers line up. Joseph stops at
Cavalieri who makes a deep curtsey.

JOSEPH

Bravo, Madame. You are an ornament
to our stage.

CAVALIERI

Majesty.

JOSEPH

(to Salieri)

And to you, Court Composer. Your
pupil has done you great credit.

INT. BACKSTAGE CORRIDOR - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S

MADAME WEBER

Let us pass, please! Let us pass at
once! We're with the Emperor.

FLUNKY

I am sorry, Madame. It is not
permitted.

MADAME WEBER

Do you know who I am?

(pointing to Constanze)

This is my daughter. I am Frau Weber.
We are favoured guests!

FLUNKY

I am sorry, Madame, but I have my
orders.

MADAME WEBER

Call Herr Mozart! You call Herr Mozart
immediately! This is insupportable!

CONSTANZE

Mother, please!

MADAME WEBER

Go ahead, Constanze. Just ignore
this fellow.

(pushing her)

Go ahead, dear!

FLUNKY

(barring the way)

I am sorry, Madame, but no! I cannot
let anyone pass.

MADAME WEBER

Young man, I am no stranger to
theatres. I'm no stranger to
insolence!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. OPERA HOUSE STAGE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S

All are applauding Cavalieri. The Emperor turns to Mozart.

JOSEPH

Well, Herr Mozart! A good effort.
Decidedly that. An excellent effort!
You've shown us something quite new
today.

Mozart bows frantically: he is over-excited.

MOZART

It is new, it is, isn't it, Sire?

JOSEPH

Yes, indeed.

MOZART

And German?

JOSEPH

Oh, yes. Absolutely. German.
Unquestionably!

MOZART

So then you like it? You really like
it, Your Majesty?

JOSEPH

Of course I do. It's very good. Of
course now and then - just now and
then - it gets a touch elaborate.

MOZART

What do you mean, Sire?

JOSEPH

Well, I mean occasionally it seems
to have, how shall one say?

(he stops in
difficulty; to Orsini-
Rosenberg)

How shall one say, Director?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Too many notes, Your Majesty?

JOSEPH

Exactly. Very well put. Too many
notes.

MOZART

I don't understand. There are just
as many notes, Majesty, as are
required. Neither more nor less.

JOSEPH

My dear fellow, there are in fact
only so many notes the ear can hear
in the course of an evening. I think
I'm right in saying that, aren't I,
Court Composer?

SALIERI

Yes! yes! er, on the whole, yes,
Majesty.

MOZART

(to Salieri)

But this is absurd!

JOSEPH

My dear, young man, don't take it
too hard. Your work is ingenious.
It's quality work. And there are
simply too many notes, that's all.
Cut a few and it will be perfect.

MOZART

Which few did you have in mind,

Majesty?

Pause. General embarrassment.

JOSEPH

Well. There it is.

Into this uncomfortable scene bursts a sudden eruption of noise and Madame Weber floods onto the stage, followed by her daughters. All turn to look at this amazing spectacle.

MADAME WEBER

Wolfi! Wolfi, my dear!

She moves toward Mozart with arms outstretched in an absurd theatrical gesture, then sees the Emperor. She stares at him, mesmerized, her mouth open, unable even to curtsy.

MADAME WEBER

Oh!

Mozart moves forward quickly.

MOZART

Majesty, this is Madame Weber. She is my landlady.

JOSEPH

Enchanted, Madame.

MADAME WEBER

Oh, Sire! such an honour! And, and, and these are my dear daughters. This is Constanze. She is the fiancée of Herr Mozart.

Constanze curtsies. CU, of Cavalieri, astonished at the news. CU, of Salieri, watching her receive it.

JOSEPH

Really? How delightful. May I ask when you marry?

MOZART

Well - Well we haven't quite received my father's consent, Your Majesty. Not entirely. Not altogether.

He giggles uncomfortably.

JOSEPH

Excuse me, but how old are you?

MOZART

Twenty-six.

JOSEPH

Well, my advice is to marry this charming young lady and stay with us in Vienna.

MADAME WEBER

You see? You see? I've told him that, Your Majesty, but he won't listen to me.

Cavaleri is glaring at Mozart. Mozart looks hastily away from her.

MADAME WEBER

Oh, Your Majesty, you give such wonderful - such impeccable - such royal advice. I - I - May I?

She attempts to kiss the royal hand, but faints instead. The Emperor contemplates her prone body and steps back a pace.

JOSEPH

Well. There it is. Strack.

He nods pleasantly to all and leaves the stage, with his Chamberlain. All bow.

Cavaleri turns with a savage look at Mozart and leaves the stage the opposite way, to her dressing room, tossing her plumed head. Salieri watches. Mozart stays for a second, indecisive whether to follow the soprano or help Madame Weber.

CONSTANZE

(to Mozart)

Get some water!

He hurries away. The daughters gather around Madame Weber.

INT. CAVALIERI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

Katherina sits fuming at her mirror. A dresser is taking the pins out of her wig as she stares straight ahead of her. Mozart sticks his head round the door.

MOZART

Katherina! I'll tell you what I'm going to do. I'm going to write another aria for you. Something even more amazing for the second act. I have to get some water. Her mother is lying on the stage.

CAVALIERI

Don't bother!

MOZART

What?

CAVALIERI

Don't bother.

MOZART

I'll be right back.

He dashes off.

INT. OPERA HOUSE STAGE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S

Constanze and Mozart make their way quickly through a crowd of actors in turbans and caftans, and stagehands carrying bits of the dismantled set of Seraglio. We see all the turmoil of backstage after a performance.

A fireman passes Mozart carrying a small bucket of water. Mozart snatches it from him and pushes his way through the crowd to Madame Weber, who still lies prone on the stage.

Mozart pushes through the crowd surrounding her and throws water on her face. She is instantly revived by the shock. Constanze assists her to rise.

CONSTANZE

Are you all right?

Instead of being furious, Madame Weber smiles at them rapturously.

MADAME WEBER

Ah, what an evening! What a wise man we have for an Emperor. Oh, my children!

(with sudden, hard
briskness)

Now I want you to write your father exactly what His Majesty said.

The activity continues to swirl around them.

MOZART

You should really go home now, Frau Weber. Your carriage must be waiting.

MADAME WEBER

But aren't you taking us?

MOZART

I have to talk to the singers.

MADAME WEBER

That's all right; we'll wait for you. Just don't take all night.

INT. CAVALIERI'S DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

Cavalieri, still in costume, is marching up and down, very agitated.

CAVALIERI

Did you know? Had you heard?

SALIERI

What?

CAVALIERI

The marriage!

SALIERI

Well, what does it matter to you?

CAVALIERI

Nothing! He can marry who he pleases. I don't give a damn.

She catches him looking at her and tries to compose herself.

CAVALIERI

How was I? Tell me honestly.

SALIERI

You were sublime.

CAVALIERI

What did you think of the music?

SALIERI

Extremely clever.

CAVALIERI

Meaning you didn't like it.

Mozart comes in unexpectedly.

MOZART

Oh - excuse me!

CAVALIERI

Is her mother still lying on the floor?

MOZART

No, she's fine.

CAVALIERI

I'm so relieved.

She seats herself at her mirror and removes her wig.

SALIERI

Dear Mozart, my sincere congratulations.

MOZART

Did you like it, then?

SALIERI

How could I not?

MOZART

It really is the best music one can hear in Vienna today. Don't you agree?

CAVALIERI

Is she a good fuck?

MOZART

What??

CAVALIERI

I assume she's the virtuoso in that department. There can't be any other reason you'd marry someone like that.

Salieri looks astonished. There is a knock on the door.

CAVALIERI

Come in!

The door opens. Constanze enters.

CONSTANZE

Excuse me, Wolfi. Mama is not feeling very well. Can we leave now?

MOZART

Of course.

CAVALIERI

No, no, no, no. You can't take him away now. This is his night. Won't you introduce us, Wolfgang?

MOZART

Excuse us, Fraulein. Good night, Signore.

Mozart hurries Constanze out of the door. Cavalieri looks after them as they go, her voice breaking and rising out of control.

CAVALIERI

You really are full of surprises, aren't you? You are quite extraordinary, you little shit!

She turns and collapses, crying with rage, into Salieri's arms. We focus on him.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

At that moment I knew beyond any doubt. He'd had her. The Creature had had my darling girl.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1820'S

The old man speaks passionately to the priest.

OLD SALIERI

It was incomprehensible. What was God up to? Here I was denying all my natural lust in order to deserve God's gift and there was Mozart indulging his in all directions - even though engaged to be married! - and no rebuke at all! Was it possible I was being tested? Was God expecting me to offer forgiveness in the face of every offense, no matter how painful? That was very possible. All the same, why him? Why use Mozart to teach me lessons in humility? My heart was filling up with such hatred for that little man. For the first time in my life I began to know really violent thoughts. I couldn't stop them.

VOGLER

Did you try?

OLD SALIERI

Every day. Sometimes for hours I would pray!

INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAY - 1780'S

The young Salieri is kneeling in desperation before the Cross.

SALIERI

Please! Please! Send him away, back
to Salzburg. For his sake as well as
mine.

CU, Christ staring from the Cross.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. AUDIENCE HALL - ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE - SALZBURG - DAY -
1780'S

We see Leopold kneeling now not to the Cross but to Archbishop
Colloredo, sitting impassively on his throne. Count Arco
stands beside him. Leopold is a desperate, once-handsome man
of sixty, now far too much the subservient courtier.

COLLOREDO

No! I won't have him back.

LEOPOLD

But he needs to be here in Salzburg,
Your Grace. He needs me and he needs
you. Your protection, your
understanding.

COLLOREDO

Hardly.

LEOPOLD

Oh sir, yes! He's about to make the
worst mistake of his life. Some little
Viennese slut is trying to trick him
into marriage. I know my son. He is
too simple to see the trap - and
there is no one there who really
cares for him.

COLLOREDO

I'm not surprised. Money seems to be
more important to him than loyalty
or friendship. He has sold himself
to Vienna. Let Vienna look out for
him.

LEOPOLD

Sir -

COLLOREDO

Your son is an unprincipled, spoiled,
conceited brat.

LEOPOLD

Yes, sir, that's the truth. But don't
blame him. The fault is mine. I was
too indulgent with him. But not again.
Never again, I promise! I implore
you - let me bring him back here.
I'll make him give his word to serve
you faithfully.

COLLOREDO

And how will you make him keep it?

LEOPOLD

Oh, sir, he's never disobeyed me in

anything. Please, Your Grace, give him one more chance.

COLLOREDO
You have leave to try.

LEOPOLD
Oh, Your Grace - I thank Your Grace!
I thank you!

In deepest gratitude he kisses the Archbishop's hand. He motions Leopold to rise. We hear the first dark fortissimo chord which begins the Overture to Don Giovanni: the theme associated with the character of the Commendatore.

LEOPOLD (V.O.)
My dear son.

The second fortissimo chord sounds.

INT. A BAROQUE CHURCH - DAY - 1780'S

We see a huge CU, of Mozart's head, looking front and down, as if reading his father's letter. We hear Leopold's voice over this image, no longer whining and anxious, but impressive.

LEOPOLD (V.O.)
I write to you with urgent news. I am coming to Vienna. Take no further steps toward marriage until we meet. You are too gullible to see your own danger. As you honour the father who has devoted his entire life to yours, do as I bid, and await my coming.

MOZART
I will.

The camera pulls back to see that he is in fact kneeling beside Constanze. A PRIEST faces them. Behind them are Madame Weber, Josefa and Sophie Weber, and a very few others. Among them, a merry looking lady in bright clothes: the BARONESS WALDSTADTEN.

PRIEST
And will you, Constanze Weber, take this man, Wolfgang to be your lawful husband?

CONSTANZE
I will.

PRIEST
I now pronounce you man and wife.

The opening kyrie of the great Mass in C Minor is heard. Mozart and Constanze kiss. They are in tears. Madame Weber and her daughters look on approvingly. The music swells and continues under the following:

INT. A ROOM IN LEOPOLD'S HOUSE - SALZBURG - NIGHT - 1780'S

There is a view of a castle in background. Leopold sits alone in his room. He is reading a letter from Wolfgang. At his

feet are his trunks, half-packed for the journey he will not now take. We hear Mozart's voice reading the following letter and we see, as the camera roves around the room, mementos of the young prodigy's early life: the little forte-piano made for him; the little violin made for him; an Order presented to him. We see a little starling in a wicker cage. And we see portraits of the boy on the walls, concluding with the familiar family portrait of Wolfgang and his sister Nannerl seated at the keyboard with Leopold standing, and the picture of their mother on the wall behind them.

MOZART (V.O.)

Most beloved father, it is done. Do not blame me that I did not wait to see your dear face. I knew you would have tried to dissuade me from my truest happiness and I could not have borne it. Your every word is precious to me. Remember how you have always told me Vienna is the City of Musicians. To conquer here is to conquer Europe! With my wife I can do it. I vow I will become regular in my habits and productive as never before. She is wonderful, Papa, and I know that you will love her. And one day soon when I am a wealthy man, you will come and live with us, and we will be so happy. I long for that day, best of Papas, and kiss your hand a hundred thousand times.

The music of the Mass fades as Leopold crumples the letter in his hand.

EXT. THE IMPERIAL GARDENS - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

Salieri stands waiting, hat in hand. Beside him stands a royal servant. Behind him, gardeners are glimpsed tending the shrubs and bushes along a grassy ride. Down this ride are seen cantering two people on horseback: the Emperor Joseph and his niece, the PRINCESS ELIZABETH. They are mounted on glossy horses. The Princess rides side-saddle. Running beside her is a panting groom. The Emperor rides elegantly; his niece, a dumpy little Hapsburg girl of sixteen, like a sack of potatoes. As they draw level with Salieri they stop, and the groom holds the head of the Princess' horse. Salieri bows respectfully.

JOSEPH

Good morning, Court Composer. This is my niece, the Princess Elizabeth.

SALIERI

Your Highness.

Out of breath, the Princess nods nervously.

JOSEPH

She has asked me to advise her on a suitable musical instructor. I think I've come up with an excellent idea.

He smiles at Salieri.

SALIERI

Oh, Your Majesty, it would be such a tremendous honour!

JOSEPH

I'm thinking about Herr Mozart.
What is your view?

Salieri's face falls, almost imperceptibly.

SALIERI

An interesting idea, Majesty. But -

JOSEPH

Yes?

SALIERI

You already commissioned an opera from Mozart.

JOSEPH

And the result satisfies.

SALIERI

Yes, of course. My concern is to protect you from any suspicion of favouritism.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. Favouritism. But I so want Mozart.

SALIERI

I'm sure there is a way, Majesty. Some kind of a little contest. I could perhaps put together a small Committee, and I could see to it naturally that it will select according to Your Majesty's wishes.

JOSEPH

You please me, Court Composer. A very clever idea.

SALIERI

(bowing)

Sire.

JOSEPH

Well. There it is.

He rides on. The groom releases her horse's head, and runs on after the Princess.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAMBERLAIN VON STRACK'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S

Von Strack sits stiffly behind his gilded desk. Mozart stands before him, trembling with anger.

MOZART

What is this, Herr Chamberlain?

VON STRACK

What is what?

MOZART

Why do I have to submit samples of my work to some stupid committee? Just to teach a sixteen-year-old girl.

VON STRACK

Because His Majesty wishes it.

MOZART

Is the Emperor angry with me?

VON STRACK

On the contrary.

MOZART

Then why doesn't he simply appoint me to the post?

VON STRACK

Mozart, you are not the only composer in Vienna.

MOZART

No, but I'm the best.

VON STRACK

A little modesty would suit you better.

MOZART

Who is on this committee?

VON STRACK

Kapellmeister Bonno, Count Orsini-Rosenberg and Court Composer Salieri.

MOZART

Naturally, the Italians! Of course! Always the Italians!

VON STRACK

Mozart -

MOZART

They hate my music. It terrifies them. The only sound Italians understand is banality. Tonic and dominant, tonic and dominant, from here to Resurrection!
(singing angrily)
Ba-ba! Ba-ba! Ba-ba! Ba-ba! Anything else is morbid.

VON STRACK

Mozart -

MOZART

Show them one interesting modulation and they faint. Ohime! Morbidezza! Morbidezza! Italians are musical idiots and you want them to judge my

music!

VON STRACK

Look, young man, the issue is simple.
If you want this post, you must submit
your stuff in the same way as all
your colleagues.

MOZART

Must I? Well, I won't! I tell you
straight: I will not!

CUT TO:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

The room is very small and untidy. Constanze is marching up
and down it, upset. Mozart is lying on the bed.

CONSTANZE

I think you're mad! You're really
mad!

MOZART

Oh, leave me alone.

CONSTANZE

One royal pupil and the whole of
Vienna will come flocking. We'd be
set up for life!

MOZART

They'll come anyway. They love me
here.

CONSTANZE

No, they will not. I know how things
work in this city.

MOZART

Oh yes? You always know everything.

CONSTANZE

Well, I'm not borrowing any more
money from my mother, and that's
that!

MOZART

You borrowed money from your mother?

CONSTANZE

Yes!

MOZART

Well, don't do that again!

CONSTANZE

How are we going to live, Wolfi? Do
you want me to go into the streets
and beg?

MOZART

Don't be stupid.

CONSTANZE

All they want to see is your work.
What's wrong with that?

MOZART
Shut up! Just shut up! I don't need
them.

CONSTANZE
This isn't pride. It's sheer
stupidity!

She glares at him, almost in tears.

CUT TO:

INT. SALIERI'S MUSIC ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON - 1780'S

Salieri is giving a lesson to a girl student, who is singing
the Italian art song, Caro Mio Ben.

There is a knock on the door.

SALIERI
Yes.

A SERVANT enters.

SERVANT
Excuse me, sir, there is a lady who
insists on talking to you.

SALIERI
Who is she?

SERVANT
She didn't say. But she says it's
urgent.

SALIERI
(to the pupil)
Excuse me, my dear.

Salieri goes into the salon.

CUT TO:

INT. THE SALON - LATE AFTERNOON - 1780'S

Constanze stands, closely veiled, holding a portfolio stuffed
with manuscripts. The singing lesson ends, with two chords
on the instrument. Salieri enters the salon. Constanze drops
him a shy curtsy.

CONSTANZE
Excellency!

SALIERI
Madame. How can I help you?

Shyly, she unveils.

SALIERI
Frau Mozart?

CONSTANZE

That's right, Your Excellency. I've come on behalf of my husband. I'm - I'm bringing some samples of his work so he can be considered for the royal appointment.

SALIERI

How charming. But why did he not come himself?

CONSTANZE

He's terribly busy, sir.

SALIERI

I understand.

He takes the portfolio and puts it on a table.

SALIERI

I will look at them, of course, the moment I can. It will be an honour. Please give him my warmest.

CONSTANZE

Would it be too much trouble, sir, to ask you to look at them now? While I wait.

SALIERI

I'm afraid I'm not at leisure this very moment. Just leave them with me. I assure you they will be quite safe.

CONSTANZE

I - I really cannot do that, Your Excellency. You see, he doesn't know I'm here.

SALIERI

Really?

CONSTANZE

My husband is a proud man, sir. He would be furious if he knew I'd come.

SALIERI

Then he didn't send you?

CONSTANZE

No, sir. This is my own idea.

SALIERI

I see.

CONSTANZE

Sir, we really need this job. We're desperate. My husband spends far more than he can ever earn. I don't mean he's lazy - he's not at all - he works all day long. It's just! he's not practical. Money simply slips through his fingers, it's really ridiculous, Your Excellency. I know you help musicians. You're famous

for it. Give him just this one post.
We'd be forever indebted!

A short pause.

SALIERI

Let me offer you some refreshment.
Do you know what these are?

He indicates a dish piled high with glazed chestnuts.

SALIERI

Cappezzoli di Venere. Nipples of
Venus. Roman chestnuts in brandied
sugar. Won't you try one? They're
quite surprising.

He offers her the dish. She takes one and puts it in her
mouth. He watches carefully.

CONSTANZE

Oh! They're wonderful.

He takes one himself. We notice on his finger a heavy gold
signet-ring.

CONSTANZE

Thank you very much, Your Excellency.

SALIERI

Don't keep calling me that. It puts
me at such a distance. I was not
born a Court Composer, you know.
I'm from a small town, just like
your husband.

He smiles at her. She takes another chestnut.

SALIERI

Are you sure you can't leave that
music, and come back again? I have
other things you might like.

CONSTANZE

That's very tempting, but it's
impossible, I'm afraid. Wolfi would
be frantic if he found those were
missing. You see, they're all
originals.

SALIERI

Originals?

CONSTANZE

Yes.

A pause. He puts out his hand and takes up the portfolio
from the table. He opens it. He looks at the music. He is
puzzled.

SALIERI

These are originals?

CONSTANZE

Yes, sir. He doesn't make copies.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

The old man faces the Priest.

OLD SALIERI

Astounding! It was actually beyond belief. These were first and only drafts of music yet they showed no corrections of any kind. Not one. Do you realize what that meant?

Vogler stares at him.

OLD SALIERI

He'd simply put down music already finished in his head. Page after page of it, as if he was just taking dictation. And music finished as no music is ever finished.

INT. SALIERI'S SALON - LATE AFTERNOON - 1780'S

CU, The manuscript in Mozart's handwriting. The music begins to sound under the following:

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

Displace one note and there would be diminishment. Displace one phrase, and the structure would fall. It was clear to me. That sound I had heard in the Archbishop's palace had been no accident. Here again was the very voice of God! I was staring through the cage of those meticulous ink-strokes at an absolute, inimitable beauty.

The music swells. What we now hear is an amazing collage of great passages from Mozart's music, ravishing to Salieri and to us. The Court Composer, oblivious to Constanze, who sits happily chewing chestnuts, her mouth covered in sugar, walks around and around his salon, reading the pages and dropping them on the floor when he is done with them. We see his agonized and wondering face: he shudders as if in a rough and tumbling sea; he experiences the point where beauty and great pain coalesce. More pages fall than he can read, scattering across the floor in a white cascade, as he circles the room.

Finally, we hear the tremendous Qui Tollis from the Mass in C Minor. It seems to break over him like a wave and, unable to bear any more of it, he slams the portfolio shut. Instantly, the music breaks off, reverberating in his head. He stands shaking, staring wildly. Constanze gets up, perplexed.

CONSTANZE

Is it no good?

A pause.

SALIERI

It is miraculous.

CONSTANZE

Oh yes. He's really proud of his work.

Another pause.

CONSTANZE

So, will you help him?

Salieri tries to recover himself.

SALIERI

Tomorrow night I dine with the Emperor. One word from me and the post is his.

CONSTANZE

Oh, thank you, sir!

Overjoyed, she stops and kisses his hand. He raises her - and then clasps her to him clumsily. She pushes herself away.

SALIERI

Come back tonight.

CONSTANZE

Tonight?

SALIERI

Alone.

CONSTANZE

What for?

SALIERI

Some service deserves service in return. No?

CONSTANZE

What do you mean?

SALIERI

Isn't it obvious?

They stare at one another: Constanze in total disbelief.

SALIERI

It's a post all Vienna seeks. If you want it for your husband, come tonight.

CONSTANZE

But! I'm a married woman!

SALIERI

Then don't. It's up to you. Not to be vague, that is the price.

He glares at her.

SALIERI

Yes.

He rings a silver bell for a servant and abruptly leaves the room. Constanze stares after him, horrified.

The servant enters. Shocked and stunned, Constanze goes down on her knees and starts picking up the music from the floor.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

CU, Father Vogler, horrified.

OLD SALIERI

Yes, Father. Yes! So much for my vow of chastity. What did it matter? Good, patient, hard-working, chaste - what did it matter? Had goodness made me a good composer? I realized it absolutely then - that moment: goodness is nothing in the furnace of art. And I was nothing to God.

VOGLER

(crying out)

You cannot say that!

OLD SALIERI

No? Was Mozart a good man?

VOGLER

God's ways are not yours. And you are not here to question Him. Offer him the salt of penitence. He will give you back the bread of eternal life. He is all merciful. That is all you need to know.

OLD SALIERI

All I ever wanted was to sing to Him. That's His doing, isn't it? He gave me that longing - then made me mute. Why? Tell me that. If He didn't want me to serve Him with music, why implant the desire, like a lust in my body, then deny me the talent? Go on, tell me! Speak for Him!

VOGLER

My son, no one can speak for God.

OLD SALIERI

Oh? I thought you did so every day. So speak now. Answer me!

VOGLER

I do not claim to unravel the mysteries. I treasure them. As you should.

OLD SALIERI

(impatiently)

Oh yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! Always the same stale answers!

(intimately to the priest)

There is no God of Mercy, Father.
Just a God of torture.

CUT TO:

INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

Salieri sits at his desk, staring up at the cross.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)
Evening came to that room. I sat
there not knowing whether the girl
would return or not. I prayed as I'd
never prayed before.

SALIERI
Dear God, enter me now. Fill me with
one piece of true music. One piece
with your breath in it, so I know
that you love me. Please. Just one.
Show me one sign of your favour, and
I will show mine to Mozart and his
wife. I will get him the royal
position, and if she comes, I'll
receive her with all respect and
send her home in joy. Enter me! Enter
me! Please! Te imploro.

Long, long silence. Salieri stares at the cross. Christ stares
back at him impassively. Finally in this silence we hear a
faint knocking at the door. Salieri stirs himself. A servant
appears.

SERVANT
That lady is back, sir.

SALIERI
Show her in. Then go to bed.

The Servant bows and leaves. We follow him through:

INT. MUSIC ROOM IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - 1780'S

The Servant crosses it and enters:

INT. SALON IN SALIERI'S APARTMENT - NIGHT - 1780'S

Constanze is sitting on an upright chair, veiled as before,
the portfolio of music on her lap. Through the far door
leading from the hall, another servant is peering at her.
The first servant joins him and shuts the door on the girl,
leaving her alone.

We stay with her. The clock ticks on the mantelpiece. We
hear an old carriage pass in the street below. Nervously she
lifts her veil and looks about her.

Suddenly Salieri appears from the music room. He is pale and
very tight. They regard each other. She smiles and rises to
greet him, affecting a relaxed and warm manner, as if to put
him at his ease.

CONSTANZE
Well, I'm here. My husband has gone
to a concert. He didn't think I would

enjoy it.

A pause.

CONSTANZE

I do apologize for this afternoon.
I behaved like a silly girl. Where
shall we go?

SALIERI

What?

CONSTANZE

Should we stay here? It's a charming
room. I love these candlesticks.
Were they here earlier? I didn't
notice them I suppose I was too
nervous.

As she talks, she extinguishes the candles in a pair of
Venetian candelabra and subsequently other candles around
the room.

CONSTANZE

Wolfgang was given some candlesticks
by King George in England, but they
were only wood. Oh, excuse me. Let's
not talk about him. What do you think
of this? It's real lace. Brussels.

She turns and takes off her shawl.

CONSTANZE

Well, it's much too good for every
day. I keep saying to Wolfi, don't
be so extravagant. Presents are
lovely, but we can't afford them.
It doesn't do any good. The more I
tell him, the more he spends. Oh,
excuse me! There I go again.

She picks up the portfolio.

CONSTANZE

Do you still want to look at this?
Or don't we need to bother anymore?
I imagine we don't, really.

She looks at him inquiringly, and drops the portfolio on the
floor; pages of music pour out of it. Instantly we hear a
massive chord, and the great Qui Tollis from the Mass in C
Minor fills the room. To its grand and weighty sound,
Constanze starts to undress, watched by the horrified Salieri.
Between him and her, music is an active presence, hurting
and baffling him. He opens his mouth in distress. The music
pounds in his head. The candle flickers over her as she
removes her clothes and prepares for his embrace. Suddenly
he cries out.

SALIERI

Go! Go! Go!

He snatches up the bell and shakes it frantically, not
stopping until the two servants we saw earlier appear at the
door. The music stops abruptly. They stare at the appalled

and frightened Constanze, who is desperately trying to cover her nakedness.

SALIERI
Show this woman out!

Constanze hurls herself at him.

CONSTANZE
You shit! You shit! You rotten shit!

He seizes her wrists and thrusts her back. Then he leaves the room quickly, slamming the door behind him. Constanze turns and sees the two servants goggling at her in the room.

CONSTANZE
What are you staring at?

Wildly, she picks up the candelabrum and throws it at them. It shatters on the floor.

INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

CU, Salieri standing, his eyes shut, shaking in distress. He opens them and sees Christ across the room, staring at him from the wall.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)
From now on, we are enemies, You and I!

CUT TO:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

The old man is reliving the experience. Vogler looks at him, horrified.

OLD SALIERI
Because You will not enter me, with
all my need for you; because You
scorn my attempts at virtue; because
You choose for Your instrument a
boastful, lustful, smutty infantile
boy and give me for reward only the
ability to recognize the Incarnation;
because You are unjust, unfair,
unkind, I will block You! I swear
it! I will hinder and harm Your
creature on earth as far as I am
able. I will ruin Your Incarnation.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

CU, the fireplace. In it lies the olivewood Christ on the cross, burning.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)
What use after all is Man, if not to
teach God His lessons?

The cross flames up and disintegrates. Salieri stares at it.

CUT TO:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

The front door bursts open. Mozart stumbles in, followed by EMMANUEL SCHIKANEDER, three young actresses, and another man, all fairly drunk. Schikaneder (who appears everywhere accompanied by young girls) is a large, fleshy, extravagant man of about thirty-five.

MOZART

Stanzi! Stanzi! Stanzi-Manzi!

The others laugh.

MOZART

Sssh!

SCHIKANEDER

(imitating Mozart)

Stanzi-Manzi-Banzi-Wanzi!

MOZART

Sssh! Stay here.

He walks unsteadily to the bedroom door and opens it.

SCHIKANEDER

(to the girls, very

tipsy)

Sssh! You're dishgrashful!

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

Constanze lies in bed, her back turned to her husband, who comes into the room and shuts the door.

MOZART

(playfully)

Stanzi? How's my mouse? Mouse-wouse?

I'm back - puss-wuss is back!

She turns around abruptly. She looks dreadful; her eyes red with weeping. Mozart is shocked.

MOZART

Stanzi!

He approaches the bed and sits on it. Immediately she starts crying again, desperately.

MOZART

What's the matter? What is it?

Stanzi!

He holds her and she clings to him in a fierce embrace, crying a flood of tears.

MOZART

Stop it now. Stop it. I've brought some friends to meet you. They're next door waiting. Do we have anything to eat? They're all starving.

CONSTANZE

Tell them to go away. I don't want to see anybody.

MOZART
What's the matter with you?

CONSTANZE
Tell them to go!

MOZART
Sssh. What is it? Tell me.

CONSTANZE
No!

MOZART
Yes!

CONSTANZE
I love you! I love you!

She starts crying again, throwing her arms around his neck.

CONSTANZE
I love you. Please stay with me. I'm frightened.

INT. THE ROYAL PALACE - DINING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

Joseph sits eating. A butler serves him goat's milk to drink. Joseph is holding a memorandum from Salieri in his hand. Salieri stands before him.

JOSEPH
I don't think you understand me,
Court Composer.

SALIERI
Majesty, I did. Believe me, it was a most agonizing decision. But finally, I simply could not recommend Herr Mozart.

JOSEPH
Why not?

SALIERI
Well, Sire, I made some inquiries in a routine way. I was curious to know why he had so few pupils. It is rather alarming.

JOSEPH
Oh?

With a gesture Joseph dismisses the butler, who bows and leaves the room.

SALIERI
Majesty, I don't like to talk against a fellow musician.

JOSEPH
Of course not.

SALIERI

I have to tell you, Mozart is not entirely to be trusted alone with young ladies.

JOSEPH

Really?

SALIERI

As a matter of fact, one of my own pupils - a very young singer - told me she was - er - well!

JOSEPH

Yes?

SALIERI

Molested, Majesty. Twice, in the course of the same lesson.

A pause.

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. Well. There it is.

INT. SALIERI'S HOUSE - STAIRCASE - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

Salieri has just returned from the palace and is coming up the staircase. He is met by his servant.

SERVANT

Sir, there is a Herr Mozart waiting for you in the salon.

Salieri is plainly alarmed.

SALIERI

What does he want?

SERVANT

He didn't say, sir. I told him I didn't know when you would be back, but he insisted on waiting.

SALIERI

Come with me. And stay in the room.

He mounts the stairs.

INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - SALON - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart is waiting for Salieri, holding a portfolio. Salieri approaches him nervously. Mozart stands not belligerently, but humbly.

SALIERI

Herr Mozart, what brings you here?

MOZART

Your Excellency, you requested some specimens of my work. Here they are. I don't have to tell you how much I need your help. I truly appreciate your looking at these. I have pressures on me - financial pressures.

As you know, I'm a married man now.

SALIERI

So you are. How is your pretty wife?

MOZART

She is well. She is - well, actually, I'm about to become a father! She only told me last night. You are the first to know.

SALIERI

I'm flattered. And congratulations to you, of course.

MOZART

So you see, this post is very important to me right now.

Salieri looks at him in distress.

SALIERI

Why didn't you come to me yesterday, Mozart? This is a most painful situation. Yesterday I could have helped you. Today, I can't.

MOZART

Why? Here is the music. It's here. I am submitting it humbly. Isn't that what you wanted?

SALIERI

I have just come from the palace. The post has been filled.

MOZART

Filled? That's impossible! They haven't even seen my work. I need this post. Please, can't you help me? Please!

SALIERI

My dear Mozart, there is no one in the world I would rather help, but now it is too late.

MOZART

Whom did they choose?

SALIERI

Herr Sommer.

MOZART

Sommer? Herr Sommer? But the man's a fool! He's a total mediocrity.

SALIERI

No, no, no: he has yet to achieve mediocrity.

MOZART

But I can't lose this post, I simply can't! Excellency, please. Let's go to the palace, and you can explain

to the Emperor that Herr Sommer is an awful choice. He could actually do musical harm to the Princess!

SALIERI

An implausible idea. Between you and me, no one in the world could do musical harm to the Princess Elizabeth.

Mozart chuckles delightedly. Salieri offers him a glass of white dessert and a spoon. Mozart takes it absently and goes on talking.

MOZART

Look, I must have pupils. Without pupils I can't manage.

SALIERI

You don't mean to tell me you are living in poverty?

MOZART

No, but I'm broke. I'm always broke. I don't know why.

SALIERI

It has been said, my friend, that you are inclined to live somewhat above your means.

MOZART

How can anyone say that? We have no cook, no maid. We have no footman. Nothing at all!

SALIERI

How is that possible? You give concerts, don't you? I hear they are quite successful.

MOZART

They're stupendously successful. You can't get a seat. The only problem is none will hire me. They all want to hear me play, but they won't let me teach their daughters. As if I was some kind of fiend. I'm not a fiend!

SALIERI

Of course not.

MOZART

Do you have a daughter?

SALIERI

I'm afraid not.

MOZART

Well, could you lend me some money till you have one? Then I'll teach her for free. That's a promise. Oh, I'm sorry. I'm being silly. Papa's right - I should put a padlock on my

mouth. Seriously, is there any chance you could manage a loan? Only for six months, eight at most. After that I'll be the richest man in Vienna. I'll pay you back double. Anything. Name your terms. I'm not joking. I'm working on something that's going to explode like a bomb all over Europe!

SALIERI

Ah, how exciting! Tell me more.

MOZART

I'd better not. It's a bit of a secret.

SALIERI

Come, come, Mozart; I'm interested. Truly.

MOZART

Actually, it's a big secret. Oh, this is delicious! What is it?

SALIERI

Cream cheese mixed with granulated sugar and suffused with rum. Crema al Mascarpone.

MOZART

Ah. Italian?

SALIERI

Forgive me. We all have patriotic feelings of some kind.

MOZART

Two thousand, two hundred florins is all I need A hundred? Fifty?

SALIERI

What exactly are you working on?

MOZART

I can't say. Really

SALIERI

I don't think you should become known in Vienna as a debtor, Mozart. However, I know a very distinguished gentleman I could recommend to you. And he has a daughter. Will that do?

INT. MICHAEL SCHLUMBERG'S HOUSE - MORNING - 1780'S

Hysterical barking and howling. The hall is full of dogs, at least five, all jumping up and dashing about and making a terrific racket. Mozart, dandified in a new coat and a plumed hat for the occasion, has arrived to teach at the house of a prosperous merchant, MICHAEL SCHLUMBERG. Bluff, friendly and coarse-looking, he stands in his hall amidst the leaping and barking animals, greeting Mozart.

SCHLUMBERG

Quiet! Quiet! Quiet! Down there,
damn you.

(to Mozart)

Welcome to you. Pay no attention,
they're impossible. Stop it, you
willful things! Come this way. Just
ignore them. They're perfectly
harmless, just willful. I treat them
just like my own children.

MOZART

And which one of them do you want me
to teach?

SCHLUMBERG

What? Ha-ha! That's funny - I like
it. Which one, eh? You're a funny
fellow.

(shouting)

Hannah! Come this way.

He leads Mozart through the throng of dogs into a salon
furnished with comfortable middle-class taste.

SCHLUMBERG

Hannah!

FRAU SCHLUMBERG appears: an anxious woman in middle life.

SCHLUMBERG

(to Mozart)

You won't be teaching this one either.
She's my wife.

MOZART

(bowing)

Madame.

SCHLUMBERG

This is Herr Mozart, my dear. The
young man Herr Salieri recommended
to teach our Gertrude. Where is she?

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

Upstairs.

SCHLUMBERG

Gertrude!

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

You can't be Herr Mozart!

MOZART

I'm afraid I am.

SCHLUMBERG

Of course, it's him. Who do you think
it is?

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

I've heard about you for ages! I
thought you must be an old man.

SCHLUMBERG

Gertrude!

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

It's such an honour for us to have you here, Herr Mozart. And for Gertrude.

SCHLUMBERG

People who know say the girl's got talent. You must judge for yourself. If you think she stinks, say so.

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

Michael, please! I'm sure you will find her most willing, Herr Mozart. She's really very excited. She's been preparing all morning.

MOZART

Really?

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

Ah, now! Here she comes.

GERTRUDE SCHLUMBERG appears in the doorway: an awkward girl of fifteen in her best dress, her hair primped and curled. She is exceedingly nervous.

MOZART

Good morning, Fraulein Schlumberg.

SCHLUMBERG

Strudel, this is Herr Mozart. Say good morning.

Gertrude giggles instead.

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

(to Mozart)

Perhaps a little refreshment first? A little coffee, or a little chocolate?

MOZART

I'd like a little wine, if you have it.

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

Wine?

SCHLUMBERG

Quite right. He's going to need it.

(calling and clapping

his hands)

Klaus! A bottle of wine. Prestissimo! Now let's go to it. I've been waiting all day for this.

He leads the way into:

INT. MUSIC ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

A forte-piano is open and waiting. All the dogs follow him. After them come Mozart Frau and Fraulein Schlumberg. To Mozart's dismay, husband and wife seat themselves quite formally on a little narrow sofa, side by side.

SCHLUMBERG

(To the dogs)

Now sit down all of you and behave.

Zeman, Mandi, absolutely quiet!

(to a young beagle)

Especially you, Dudelsachs - not one sound from you.

The dogs settle at their feet. Husband and wife smile encouragingly at each other.

SCHLUMBERG

Come on, then. Up and at it!

Mozart gestures to the music bench. Reluctantly, the girl sits at the instrument. Mozart sits beside her.

MOZART

Now, please play me something. Just to give me an idea. Anything will do.

GERTRUDE

(to parents)

I don't want you to stay.

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

That's all right, dear. Just go ahead, as if we weren't here.

GERTRUDE

But you are here.

SCHLUMBERG

Never mind, Strudel. It's part of music, getting used to an audience. Aren't I right, Herr Mozart?

MOZART

Well, yes! on the whole. I suppose.

(to Gertrude)

How long have you been playing, Fraulein?

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

Just one year.

MOZART

Who was your teacher?

FRAU SCHLUMBERG

I was. But she quite outgrew the little I could show her.

MOZART

Thank you, Madame.

(to Gertrude)

Come on now - courage. Play me something you know.

In response the wretched girl just stares down at the keyboard without playing a note. An awkward pause.

MOZART

Perhaps it would be better if we
were left alone. I think we're both
a little shy.

Husband and wife look at each other.

SCHLUMBERG
Nonsense. Strudel's not shy. She's
just willful! You give into her now,
you'll be sorry later. Strudel -
play.

Silence. The girl sits unmoving. Schlumberg bellows:

SCHLUMBERG
I said play!

FRAU SCHLUMBERG
Michael!

MOZART
Perhaps if I were to play a little
first, it might encourage the
Fraulein.
(to the girl)
Why don't you let me try the
instrument? All right?

Suddenly the girl rises. Mozart smiles at the parents. They
smile nervously back. Mozart slides along the bench, raises
his hands and preludes over the keys. Instantly a dog howls
loudly. Startled, Mozart stops. Schlumberg leaps to his feet
and goes over to the beagle.

SCHLUMBERG
Stop that, Dudelsachs! Stop it at
once!
(to Mozart)
Don't let him disturb you. He'll be
all right. He's just a little willful
too. Please, please - play. I beg
you.

Mozart resumes playing. This time it is a lively piece,
perhaps the Presto Finale from the K. 450. The dog howls
immediately.

SCHLUMBERG
Stop it! STOP!

Mozart stops.

SCHLUMBERG
No, not you. I was talking to the
dog. You keep playing. It's most
important. He always howls when he
hears music. We've got to break them
of the habit. Play, please. Please!

Amazed, Mozart starts to play the Rondo again. The dog howls
louder.

SCHLUMBERG
That's it. Now keep going, just keep
going.

(to the beagle)
Now you stop that noise, Dudelsachs,
you stop it this instant! This
instant, do you hear me? Keep going,
Herr Mozart, that's it. Go on, go
on!

Mozart plays on. Suddenly the dog falls silent. Schlumberg
smiles broadly.

SCHLUMBERG
Good, good, good! Very good dog!
Very, very good Dudelsachs.
(to his wife, snapping
his fingers)
Quick, quick, dear, bring his biscuit.

The wife scurries to get a jar of biscuits. A servant brings
in an open bottle of wine and a full glass on a tray. He
puts it down beside Mozart as Schlumberg addresses the silent
dog with deepest affection.

SCHLUMBERG
Now guess who's going to get a nice
reward? Clever, clever Dudi.

He gives the biscuit to the dog who swallows it greedily.
Mozart stops playing and stands up.

SCHLUMBERG
It's a miracle, Herr Mozart!

MOZART
(barely controlling
himself)
Well, I'm a good teacher. The next
time you wish me to instruct another
of your dogs, please let me know.
Goodbye, Fraulein, goodbye, Madame!
goodbye, Sir!

He bows to them and leaves the room. They look after him in
puzzled astonishment.

FRAU SCHLUMBERG
What a strange young man.

SCHLUMBERG
Yes. He is a little strange.

EXT. A BUSY STREET IN VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

A cheerful scene. We see Mozart strutting and beaming, making
his way through the crowd of porters, carriers and hawkers,
sellers of sausages and pastries, vendors of hats and ribbons.
Horses and carriage clatter past him. His mood is best
expressed by a bubbling version of Non piu Andrai played on
the forte-piano.

Still in the same mood, he enters the door of his own house.

INT. MOZART'S HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY - 1780'S

Suddenly, he stops. He looks up the stairs. The grim opening
chords from the Overture to Don Giovanni cut across the march

from Figaro. What he sees, looking up the stairs, is a menacing figure in a long, grey cape and dark grey hat, standing on the landing. The light comes from behind the figure so that we see only its silhouette as it unfolds its arms towards Mozart in an alarming gesture of possession. It takes a beat in which the air of sinister mystery is held before Mozart realizes who it is. Then, as the music continues, he hastily sets down the bottle of wine and rushes joyfully up the stairs and hurls himself into the figure's arms.

MOZART

Papa! PAPA!

Both men embrace. The music slowly fades.

INT. MOZART'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

A cramped, low-ceilinged little room which nobody has tidied for ages. We see music lying everywhere. Also there are many empty wine bottles; musical instruments - among them a mandolin, a viola, a forte-piano with the black and white keys reversed - books and abandoned plates of food.

Mozart clasps his father's arms. Leopold is now seen as an aging, travel-stained man in clothes that need repair. His face is lined, and he is obviously not in perfect health.

MOZART

Why are you here?

LEOPOLD

Am I not welcome?

MOZART

Of course, welcome! Welcome ten thousand times. Papa! my Papa!

He kisses his hands.

LEOPOLD

You're very thin. Does she not feed you, this wife of yours?

Mozart ducks away and fetches his father's bags from the landing.

MOZART

Feed? Well, of course she feeds me. She stuffs me like a goose all day long. She's the best cook in the world. I mean, since Mama. Just wait, you'll see.

LEOPOLD

Is she not here?

MOZART

I don't know. Stanzi? Stanzi!

Leopold looks about him at the mess in the room.

LEOPOLD

Do you always live like this?

MOZART

Oh, yes. Oh, I mean no - not exactly like this. I mean today - just today, Stanzi - I remember now. She had to go - yes! She had to help her mother. Yes, she's like that. Her mother's a very sweet woman, you'll see.

He carries the bag across the room and opens the door of the bedroom. Constanze lies in bed. She sits up, startled.

MOZART

Oh! I didn't know you were home.
Stanzi, this is my father.

Constanze, who looks ill and tired, stares at Leopold.
Leopold stares back from the doorway.

MOZART

We'll wait, we'll wait. Why don't you get up now, darling?

He closes the door again.

MOZART

She's very tired, poor creature.
You know me: I'm a real pig. It's not so easy cleaning up after me.

LEOPOLD

Don't you have a maid?

MOZART

Oh we could, if we wanted to, but Stanzi won't hear of it. She wants to do everything herself.

LEOPOLD

How is your financial situation?

MOZART

It couldn't be better.

LEOPOLD

That's not what I hear.

MOZART

What do you mean? It's wonderful.
Really, it's - it's marvelous! People love me here.

LEOPOLD

They say you're in debt.

MOZART

Who? Who says that? Now that's a malicious lie!

LEOPOLD

How many pupils do you have?

MOZART

Pupils?

LEOPOLD

Yes.

MOZART

Yes.

LEOPOLD

How many?

MOZART

I don't know. It's not important. I mean, I don't want pupils. They get in the way. I've got to have time for composition.

LEOPOLD

Composition doesn't pay. You know that.

MOZART

This one will.

He picks up some pages of manuscript.

LEOPOLD

What's that?

MOZART

Oh, let's not talk about it.

LEOPOLD

Why not?

MOZART

It's a secret.

LEOPOLD

You don't have secrets from me.

MOZART

It's too dangerous, Papa. But they're going to love it. Ah, there she is!

Constanze comes into the room. She is wearing a dressing gown and has made a perfunctory attempt to tidy her hair. We see that she is clearly pregnant.

MOZART

My Stanzi - look at her! Isn't she beautiful? Come on now, confess, Papa. Could you want a prettier girl for a daughter?

CONSTANZE

Stop it, Wolfi. I look dreadful. Welcome to our house, Herr Mozart.

MOZART

He's not Herr Mozart. Call him Papa.

LEOPOLD

I see that you're expecting.

CONSTANZE

Oh, yes.

LEOPOLD

When, may I ask?

CONSTANZE

In three months! Papa.

MOZART

Isn't that marvelous? We're delighted.

LEOPOLD

Why didn't you mention it in your letters?

MOZART

Didn't I? I thought I did. I'm sure I did.

He gives a little giggle of embarrassment.

CONSTANZE

May I offer you some tea, Herr Mozart?

MOZART

Tea? Who wants tea? Let's go out! This calls for a feast. You don't want tea, Papa. Let's go dancing. Papa loves parties, don't you?

CONSTANZE

Wolfi!

MOZART

What? How can you be so boring? Tea!

CONSTANZE

Wolfi, I think your father's tired. I'll cook us something here.

LEOPOLD

Thank you. That'll be fine. Don't spend any money on me.

MOZART

Why not? Oh, come, Papa! What better way could I spend it than on you? My kissable, missable, suddenly visible Papa!

The jaunty tune of Ich Mochte Wohl Der Kaiser sein (K.539) sounds through all the following. This is an alternate song from Il Seraglio: a very extroverted tune for baritone and orchestra and a prominent part for bass drum. The vocal part should be arranged for trumpet.

EXT. STREET IN VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart and Constanze with Leopold between them. We see couples shopping.

INT. A COSTUME SHOP - VIENNA - DAY - 1780'S

This is a shop where one can buy costumes for masquerades. It is filled with extravagant costumes of various kinds. Wolfgang is wearing a costume, a mask pushed up on his

forehead; Constanze is wearing a little white velvet mask.

Amidst the merriment, Leopold is helped by two assistants to put on a dark grey cloak and a dark grey tricorne hat, to which is attached a full mask of dark grey. Its mouth is cut into a fixed upward smile.

He turns and looks at his son through this mask.

CUT STRAIGHT TO:

INT. A LARGE PARTY ROOM - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S

We are in the full whirl of a Masquerade Ball. Couples are dancing around dressed in fantastic costumes. The music of *Ich Mochte Wohl Der Kaiser sein* increases in volume and persists. We see the musicians thumping it out on a balustrade above the dancers. A steer is being roasted. Through the bobbing crowd we see a group, headed by the figure of Bacchus: this is Schikaneder in a Greek costume, wearing vine leaves in his hair. He is accompanied by his usual trio of actresses and three other men. Constanze as Columbine and Mozart as Harlequin are pulling Leopold by the hand of his dark cloak and smiling mask. This whole group threads its way across the crowded room and disappears through a door. As they go, they are watched by Salieri, standing alone in a corner, wearing ordinary evening clothes. He turns away hastily to avoid being seen by them.

As soon as they disappear into the far room, Salieri goes quickly to a lady in the corner who is giving guests domino masks off a tray. He quickly takes a small black mask and puts it on.

CUT TO:

INT. A GROTTO ROOM NEXT DOOR - NIGHT - 1780'S

A fantastic room designed as a rocky grotto, lit by candles. A forte-piano to one side is being played by Schikaneder: the music of *Ich Mochte Wohl Der Kaiser sein* cross-fades to another tune. This is *Vivat Bacchus* from *Il Seraglio* which

Schikaneder, dressed as Bacchus, is humming as he plays. The music is actually accompanying a game of *Forfeits*, which has begun. Five couples (the group we have just seen) are dancing in the middle of a ring made by nine chairs. When the music stops they will each have to find a chair, and the one who fails must pay a forfeit.

Constanze is dancing with Leopold; Mozart is dancing with one of the actresses; the two other actresses are dancing with two other gentlemen; and two children dance together - a little boy and a little girl. The scene is watched by a circle of bystanders; among them - from the doorway - is Salieri.

Schikaneder stops playing. Immediately the couples scramble for the chairs. Leopold and Constanze meet on the same chair, bumping and pushing at each other to get sole possession of it. To the amusement of the people around, the chair over-balances and they both end up on the floor. Constanze immediately gets up again, sets the chair on its feet, and tries to pretend she was sitting in it all the time. But Schikaneder calls out from the forte-piano.

SCHIKANEDER

No, no! You both lost. You both lost.
You both have to forfeit. And the
penalty is you must exchange your
wigs.

People are delighted by the idea of this penalty. The children jump up and down with excitement. The three actresses immediately surround Leopold, reaching for his hat and mask and wig, whilst he tries to hold on to them. Mozart takes off Constanze's wig - an absurd affair with side-curls. Constanze laughingly surrenders it.

LEOPOLD

No, please! This is ridiculous! No,
please!

Despite his protests an actress takes off his hat, to which the smiling mask is attached, to reveal his outraged face showing a very different expression underneath. Another actress snatches off his wig to reveal very sparse hair on the old man's head. The third actress takes Constanze's wig from Mozart and attempts to put it on his father's head.

LEOPOLD

No, really!

MOZART

(calling to him)
This is just a game, Papa.

Constanze echoes him with a touch of malice in her voice.

CONSTANZE

This is just a game, Papa!

Laughingly, the bystanders take it up, especially the children.

BYSTANDERS

This is just a game, Papa!

As Leopold glares furiously about him, the actress succeeds in getting Constanze's wig firmly onto his head. Everybody bursts into applause. Delightedly, Constanze puts on Leopold's wig, hat and mask: from the waist up she now looks like a weird parody of Leopold in the smiling grey mask, and he looks like a weird parody of her in the silly feminine wig. Schikaneder starts to play again, and the couples start to dance. Leopold angrily takes off Constanze's wig and leaves the circle; his partner, Constanze, is left alone. Seeing this, Mozart leaves his partner and catches his father entreatingly by the arm.

MOZART

Oh no, Papa, please! Don't spoil the
fun. Come on. Here, take mine.

He takes off his own wig and puts it on Leopold's uncovered head. The effect, if not as ridiculous, is still somewhat bizarre, since Wolfgang favours fairly elaborate wigs. He takes Constanze's wig from his father. As this happens, the music stops again. Mozart gently pushes his father down onto a nearby chair; the others scramble for the other chairs;

and he is left as the Odd Man Out. He giggles. Schikaneder calls out to Leopold from the keyboard.

SCHIKANEDER

Herr Mozart, why don't you name your son's penalty?

Applause.

MOZART

Yes, Papa, name it. Name it. I'll do anything you say!

LEOPOLD

I want you to come back with me to Salzburg, my son.

SCHIKANEDER

What did he say? What did he say?

MOZART

Papa, the rule is you can only give penalties that can be performed in the room.

LEOPOLD

I'm tired of this game. Please play without me.

MOZART

But my penalty. I've got to have a penalty.

All the bystanders are watching.

SCHIKANEDER

I've got a good one. I've got the perfect one for you. Come over here.

Mozart runs over to the forte-piano, and Schikaneder surrenders his place at it.

SCHIKANEDER

Now, I want you to play our tune - sitting backwards.

Applause.

MOZART

Oh, that's really too easy. Any child can do that.

Amused sounds of disbelief.

SCHIKANEDER

And a fugue in the manner of Sebastian Bach.

Renewed applause at this wicked extra penalty. Mozart smiles at Schikaneder - it is the sort of challenge he loves. He defiantly puts on Constanze's wig and seats himself with his back to the keyboard. Before the astonished eyes of the company he proceeds to execute this absurdly difficult task. His right hand plays the bass part, his left hand the treble, and with this added difficulty he improvises a brilliant

fugue on the subject of the tune to which they have been dancing.

Attracted by this astonishing feat, the players draw nearer to the instrument. So does Salieri, cautiously, with some of the bystanders. Constanze watches him approach. Only Leopold sits by himself, sulking.

The fugue ends amidst terrific clapping. The guests call out to Mozart.

GUESTS

Another! Do another! Someone else.

MOZART

Give me a name. Who shall I do?

Give me a name.

GUESTS

Gluck! Haydn! Frederic Handel!

CONSTANZE

Salieri! Do Salieri!

SMASH CUT: Salieri's masked face whips around and looks at her.

MOZART

Now that's hard. That's very hard.

For Salieri one has to face the right way around.

Giggling, he turns around and sits at the keyboard. Then, watched by a highly amused group, he begins a wicked parody.

He furrows his brow in mock concentration and closes his eyes. Then he begins to play the tune to which they danced, in the most obvious way imaginable, relying heavily on a totally and offensively unimaginative bass of tonic and dominant, endlessly repeated. The music is the very essence of banality. The bystanders rock with laughter. Mozart starts to giggle wildly. Through this excruciating scene, Salieri stares at Constanze, who suddenly turns her head and looks challengingly back at him.

Mozart's parody reaches its coarse climax with him adding a fart noise instead of notes to end cadences. He builds this up, urged on in his clowning by everyone else, until suddenly he stops and cries out. The laughter cuts off. Mozart stands up, clutching his behind as if he has made a mess in his breeches. The momentary hush of alarm is followed by a howl of laughter.

CU, Salieri staring in pain.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

CU, The old man is shaking at the very recollection of his humiliation.

OLD SALIERI

Go on. Mock me. Laugh, laugh!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. GROTTO - NIGHT - 1780'S

A repetition of the shot of Mozart at the forte-piano, wearing Constanze's wig and emitting a shrill giggle.

CUT TO:

INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

Salieri sits at his desk. He holds in his hand the small black party mask and stares in hatred at the place on the wall where the crucifix used to hang. Faintly we see the mark of the cross.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

That was not Mozart laughing, Father.
That was God. That was God! God
laughing at me through that obscene
giggle. Go on, Signore. Laugh. Rub
my nose in it. Show my mediocrity
for all to see. You wait! I will
laugh at You! Before I leave this
earth, I will laugh at You! Amen!

INT. MOZART'S WORKROOM - DAY - 1780'S

It is littered with manuscripts. In the middle stands a billiard table. The beautiful closing ensemble from Act IV of Figaro: Ah, Tutti contenti! Saremo cosi plays in the background. Standing at the billiard table, Mozart is dreamily hearing the music and playing shots on the table.

From time to time he drifts over to a piece of manuscript paper and jots down notes. He is very much in his own world of composition and the billiard balls are an aid to creation. Presently, however, we hear a knocking at the door.

CONSTANZE

(outside the door)

Wolfi! Wolfgang!

The music breaks off.

MOZART

What is it?

He opens the door.

CONSTANZE

There's a young girl to see you.

MOZART

What does she want?

CONSTANZE

I don't know.

MOZART

Well, ask her!

CONSTANZE

She won't talk to me. She says she
has to speak to you.

MOZART

Oh, damn!

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart comes out. Framed in the doorway from outside stands Lork, the maid we noticed in Salieri's house. From his bedroom Leopold peeps out to watch. Mozart goes to the girl. Constanze follows.

MOZART

Yes?

LORK

Are you Herr Mozart?

MOZART

That's right.

LORK

My name is Lork, sir. I'm a maidservant. I was asked to come here and offer my services to you.

MOZART

What?

LORK

They'll be paid for by a great admirer or yours who wishes to remain anon - anonymous.

CONSTANZE

What do you mean? What admirer?

LORK

I can't tell you that, ma'am.

MOZART

Are you saying that someone is paying you to be our maid and doesn't want us to know who he is?

LORK

Yes. I can live in or out just as you wish.

Mozart turns to his father.

MOZART

Papa, is this your idea?

LEOPOLD

Mine?

The old man emerges from his bedroom. His son looks at him delightedly.

MOZART

Are you playing a trick on me?

LEOPOLD

I never saw this girl in my life.

(to Lork)

Is this a kind of joke?

LORL

Not at all, sir. And I was told to wait for an answer.

LEOPOLD

Young woman, this won't do at all. My son can't possibly accept such an offer, no matter how generous, unless he knows who is behind it.

LORL

But I really can't tell you, sir.

LEOPOLD

Oh, this is ridiculous.

CONSTANZE

What is ridiculous? Wolfi has many admirers in Vienna. They love him here. People send us gifts all the time.

LEOPOLD

But you can't take her without reference. It's unheard of!

CONSTANZE

Well, this is none of your business.
(to Lorl)
Whoever sent you is going to pay, no?

LORL

That's right, ma'am.

LEOPOLD

So now we are going to let a perfect stranger into the house?

Constanze looks furiously at him, then at Lorl.

CONSTANZE

Who is we? Who is letting who?
(to Lorl)
Could you please wait outside?

LORL

Yes, ma'am.

Lorl goes outside and closes the door. Constanze turns on Leopold.

CONSTANZE

Look, old man, you stay out of this. We spend a fortune on you, more than we can possibly afford, and all you do is criticize, morning to night. And then you think you can -

MOZART

Stanzi!

CONSTANZE

No, it's right he should hear. I'm sick to death of it. We can't do

anything right for you, can we?

LEOPOLD

Never mind. You won't have to do anything for me ever again. I'm leaving!

MOZART

Papa!

LEOPOLD

Don't worry, I'm not staying here to be a burden.

MOZART

No one calls you that.

LEOPOLD

She does. She says I sleep all day.

CONSTANZE

And so you do! The only time you come out is to eat.

LEOPOLD

And what do you expect? Who wants to walk out into a mess like this every day?

CONSTANZE

Oh, now I'm a bad housekeeper!

LEOPOLD

So you are! The place is a pigsty all the time.

CONSTANZE

(to Mozart)

Do you hear him? Do you?

Explosively she opens the door.

CONSTANZE

(to Lort)

When can you start?

LORT

Right away, ma'am.

CONSTANZE

Good! Come in. You'll start with that room there.

(indicating Leopold's room)

It's filthy!

She leads the maid into Leopold's room. Mozart steals back into his workroom and gently closes the door. Leopold is left alone.

LEOPOLD

Sorry, sorry! I'm sorry I spoke!
I'm just a provincial from Salzburg.
What do I know about smart Vienna?
Parties all night, every night.

Dancing and drinking like idiot
children!

INT. MOZART'S WORKROOM - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart stands trying to blot out the noise of his father's shouting from the next room.

LEOPOLD (O.S.)
Dinner at eight! Dinner at ten! Dinner
when anyone feels like it! If anyone
feels like it!

The ensemble of Ah, Tutti contenti! Saremo cosi from Act IV of Figaro resumes, coming to his aid and rising to greet the listener with its serene harmonies. Relieved, Mozart languidly picks up his cue and plays a shot on the billiard table: he is sucked back into his own world of sound.

INT. SALIERI'S SALON - NIGHT - 1780'S

The music fades. We see Lorl, dressed in a walking cloak, sitting before a desk, talking to someone confidentially.

LORL
They're out every night, sir. Till
all hours.

A hand comes into frame offering a plate of sugared biscuits. On its finger we see the gold signet ring belonging to Salieri.

LORL
(taking one)
Oh, thank you, sir.

SALIERI
Do any pupils come to the house?

LORL
Not that I've seen.

SALIERI
Then how does he pay for all this?
Does he work at all?

LORL
Oh, yes, sir, all day long. He never
leaves the house until evening. He
just sits there, writing and writing.
He doesn't even eat.

SALIERI
Really? What is it he's writing?

LORL
Oh, I wouldn't know that, sir.

SALIERI
Of course not. You're a good girl.
You're very kind to do this. Next
time you're sure they'll be out of
the house, let me know, will you?

Confused, the girl hesitates. He hands her a pile of coins.

LORL

Oh, thank you, sir!

She accepts them, delighted.

EXT. MOZART'S HOUSE - VIENNA STREET - AFTERNOON - 1780'S

The final movement of Mozart's Piano Concerto in E-flat (K. 482) begins. To its lively music, the door of the house bursts open and a grand forte-piano augmented with a pedal is carried out of it by six men, who run off with it down the street. Following them immediately appear Wolfgang, Constanze and Leopold, all three dressed for an occasion. They climb into a waiting carriage which drives off after the forte-piano. As soon as it goes, Lorl appears in the doorway, peering slyly around to see that they are out of sight. Then she shuts the door and hurries off in the opposite direction.

CUT TO:

EXT. AN ORNAMENTAL GARDEN - VIENNA - AFTERNOON - 1780'S

An outdoor concert is being given. Mozart is actually playing the final movement of his E-flat concerto with an orchestra. Listening to him is a sizable audience, including the Emperor, flanked by Strack and Von Swieten.

The crowd is in a happy and appreciative mood: it is a delightful open-air scene. We hear the gayest and most complex passage. Leopold and Constanze listen to Mozart, who plays his own work brilliantly. We stay with this scene for a little while and then

CUT TO:

EXT. VIENNA STREET - AFTERNOON - 1780'S

A carriage clopping through the streets. Lorl is sitting up on the box beside the driver. Inside the vehicle, we glimpse the figure of Salieri.

EXT. AN ORNAMENTAL GARDEN - VIENNA - 1780'S

We hear more of the concerto. Perhaps the slow interlude in the last movement of K. 482. Mozart is conducting and playing in a reflective mood. Abruptly we

CUT TO:

EXT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - AFTERNOON - 1780'S

Lorl is opening the door admitting Salieri. They go in. The door shuts.

INT. MOZART'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON - 1780'S

The room is considerably tidier as a result of Lorl's ministrations. Salieri stands looking about him with tremendous curiosity.

LORL

I think I've found out about the money, sir.

SALIERI

Yes what?

She opens a drawer in a sideboard. Inside we see one gold snuff box: it is the one we saw Mozart being presented with as a child in the Vatican.

LORL

He kept seven snuff boxes in here.
I could swear they were all gold.
And now look there's only one left.
And inside, sir, look - I counted
them - tickets from the pawnshop.
Six of them.

Salieri turns to look around him.

SALIERI

Where does he work?

LORL

In there, sir.

She points across the room to the workroom. Salieri crosses and goes in alone.

INT. MOZART'S WORKROOM - AFTERNOON - 1780'S

Salieri enters the private quarters of Amadeus. He is immensely excited. He moves slowly into the 'holy of holies' picking up objects with great reverence - a billiard ball; a discarded wig; a sock; a buckle - then objects more important to him. Standing at Mozart's desk, strewn with manuscripts, he picks up Mozart's pen and strokes the feather. He touches the inkstand. He lays a finger on the candlestick with its half-expired candle. He touches each object as if it were the memento of a beloved. He is in awe. Finally his eye falls on the sheets of music themselves. Stealthily he picks them up.

CU, The pages.

We see words set to music. Against each line of notes is the name of a character: Contessa, Susanna, Cherubino. Then another page - the title page - written in Mozart's hand.

Le Nozze di Figaro Comedia per musica tratta dal Francese in quattro atti.

CU, The word Figaro.

CU, Salieri. He stares amazed.

CUT TO:

EXT. ORNAMENTAL GARDEN - VIENNA - AFTERNOON - 1780'S

Mozart is playing the cadenza and coda of Piano Concerto (K. 482). He completes the work with a flourish. There is loud applause. The Emperor rises and all follow suit. Mozart comes down to be greeted by him.

JOSEPH

Bravo, Mozart. Most charming. Yes,
indeed. Clever man.

MOZART

Thank you, Sire!

VON SWIETEN

Well done, Mozart. Really quite fine.

MOZART

Baron!

He sees his wife and father standing by in the crowd. Leopold is signaling insistently.

MOZART

Majesty, may I ask you to do me the greatest favour?

JOSEPH

What is it?

MOZART

May I introduce my father? He is on a short visit here and returning very soon to Salzburg. He would so much like to kiss your hand. It would make his whole stay so memorable for him.

JOSEPH

Ah! By all means.

Leopold comes forward eagerly and fawningly kisses the royal hand.

LEOPOLD

Your Majesty.

Constanze curtsies.

JOSEPH

Good evening.

(to Leopold)

We have met before, Herr Mozart.

LEOPOLD

That's right, Your Majesty. Twenty years ago. No, twenty-two! twenty-three! And I remember word for word what you said to me. You said - you said --

He searches his memory.

JOSEPH

Bravo?

LEOPOLD

No! Yes, 'bravo,' of course 'bravo'! Everybody always says 'bravo' when Wolfi plays. Like the King of England. When we played for the King of England, he got up at the end and said, 'Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!' three times. Three bravo's. And the Pope four! Four bravo's from the Holy

Father, and one 'bellissimo.'

All the courtiers around are looking at him.

MOZART

Father -

LEOPOLD

Hush! I'm talking to His Majesty.
Your Majesty, I wish to express only
one thing - that you who are the
Father of us all, could teach our
children the gratitude they owe to
fathers. It is not for nothing that
the Fifth Commandment tells us:
'Honour your Father and Mother, that
your days may be long upon the earth.'

JOSEPH

Ah-ha. Well. There it is.

CUT TO:

INT. ORSINI-ROSENBERG'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S

The Director sits at his table with Salieri and Bonno.

SALIERI

I've just learned something that
might be of interest to you, Herr
Director.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Yes?

SALIERI

Mozart is writing a new opera. An
Italian opera.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Italian?

BONNO

Aie!

SALIERI

And that's not all. He has chosen
for his subject, Figaro. The Marriage
of Figaro.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

You mean that play?

SALIERI

Exactly.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

He's setting that play to music?

SALIERI

Yes.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

You must be mad.

BONNO

What is this Marriage of Figaro?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

It's a French play, Kapellmeister.
It has been banned by the Emperor.

BONNO

Hah!

He crosses himself, wide-eyed with alarm.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Are you absolutely sure?

SALIERI

I've seen the manuscript.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Where?

SALIERI

Never mind.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAMBERLAIN VON STRACK'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S

VON STRACK

I know we banned this play, but
frankly I can't remember why. Can
you refresh my memory, Herr Director?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

For the same reason, Herr Chamberlain,
that it was banned in France.

VON STRACK

Oh yes, yes. And that was?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Well, the play makes a hero out of a
valet. He outwits his noble master
and exposes him as a lecher. Do you
see the implications? This would be,
in a grander situation, as if a
Chamberlain were to expose an Emperor.

VON STRACK

Ah.

CUT TO:

INT. THE EMPEROR'S STUDY - DAY - 1780'S

The Emperor stands in the middle of the room in close
conversation with Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Von Swieten,
and Bonno. Salieri is not present. A door opens and a lackey
announces:

LACKEY

Herr Mozart.

They all turn. Mozart approaches, rather apprehensively, and
kisses Joseph's hand.

JOSEPH

Sit down, gentlemen, please.

They all sit, save Mozart. The room suddenly looks like a tribunal. Joseph is in a serious mood.

JOSEPH

Mozart, are you aware I have declared the French play of Figaro unsuitable for our theatre?

MOZART

Yes, Sire.

JOSEPH

Yet we hear you are making an opera from it. Is this true?

MOZART

Who told you this, Majesty?

JOSEPH

It is not your place to ask questions. Is it true?

MOZART

Well, yes, I admit it is.

JOSEPH

Would you tell me why?

MOZART

Well, Majesty, it is only a comedy.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

What you think, Mozart, is scarcely the point. It is what His Majesty thinks that counts.

MOZART

But, Your Majesty -

JOSEPH

(motioning him to be silent)

Mozart, I am a tolerant man. I do not censor things lightly. When I do, I have good reason. Figaro is a bad play. It stirs up hatred between the classes. In France it has caused nothing but bitterness. My own dear sister Antoinette writes me that she is beginning to be frightened of her own people. I do not wish to see the same fears starting here.

MOZART

Sire, I swear to Your Majesty, there's nothing like that in the story. I have taken out everything that could give offense. I hate politics.

JOSEPH

I think you are rather innocent, my

friend. In these dangerous times I cannot afford to provoke our nobles or our people simply over a theatre piece.

The others look at their king solemnly, all save Mozart.

MOZART

But, Majesty, this is just a frolic. It's a piece about love.

JOSEPH

Ah, love again.

MOZART

But it's new, it's entirely new. It's so new, people will go mad for it. For example, I have a scene in the second act - it starts as a duet, just a man and wife quarreling. Suddenly the wife's scheming little maid comes in unexpectedly - a very funny situation. Duet turns into trio. Then the husband's equally screaming valet comes in. Trio turns into quartet. Then a stupid old gardener - quartet becomes quintet, and so on. On and on, sextet, septet, octet! How long do you think I can sustain that?

JOSEPH

I have no idea.

MOZART

Guess! Guess, Majesty. Imagine the longest time such a thing could last, then double it.

JOSEPH

Well, six or seven minutes! maybe eight!

MOZART

Twenty, sire! How about twenty? Twenty minutes of continuous music. No recitatives.

VON SWIETEN

Mozart -

MOZART

(ignoring him)

Sire, only opera can do this. In a play, if more than one person speaks at the same time, it's just noise. No one can understand a word. But with music, with music you can have twenty individuals all talking at once, and it's not noise - it's a perfect harmony. Isn't that marvelous?

VON SWIETEN

Mozart, music is not the issue here. No one doubts your talent. It is

your judgment of literature that's
in question. Even with the politics
taken out, this thing would still
remain a vulgar farce. Why waste
your spirit on such rubbish? Surely
you can choose more elevated themes?

MOZART

Elevated? What does that mean?
Elevated! The only thing a man should
elevate is - oh, excuse me. I'm sorry.
I'm stupid. But I am fed up to the
teeth with elevated things! Old dead
legends! How can we go on forever
writing about gods and legends?

VON SWIETEN

(aroused)

Because they do. They go on forever -
at least what they represent. The
eternal in us, not the ephemeral.
Opera is here to ennoble us. You and
me, just as much as His Majesty.

BONNO

Bello! Bello, Barone. Veramente.

MOZART

Oh, bello, bello, bello! Come on
now, be honest. Wouldn't you all
rather listen to your hairdressers
than Hercules? Or Horatius? Or
Orpheus? All those old bores! people
so lofty they sound as if they shit
marble!

VON SWIETEN

What?

VON STRACK

Govern your tongue, sir! How dare
you?

Beat. All look at the Emperor.

MOZART

Forgive me, Majesty. I'm a vulgar
man. But I assure you, my music is
not.

JOSEPH

You are passionate, Mozart! But you
do not persuade.

MOZART

Sire, the whole opera is finished.
Do you know how much work went into
it?

BONNO

His Majesty has been more than
patient, Signore.

MOZART

How can I persuade you if you won't

let me show it?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG
That will do, Herr Mozart!

MOZART
Just let me tell you how it begins.

VON STRACK
Herr Mozart -

MOZART
May I just do that, Majesty? Show
you how it begins? Just that?

A slight pause. Then Joseph nods.

JOSEPH
Please.

Mozart falls on his knees.

MOZART
Look! There's a servant, down on his
knees. Do you know why? Not from any
oppression. No, he's simply measuring
a space. Do you know what for? His
bed. His wedding bed to see if it
will fit.

He giggles.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart sits on stage at a harpsichord rehearsing the singers
taking the parts of Figaro and Susanna in the opening bars
of the first act of The Marriage of Figaro. We watch Figaro
measuring the space for his bed on the floor, singing and
Susanna looking on, trying on the Countess' hat.

CUT TO:

INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1780'S

Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno are sitting with Salieri.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG
Well, Mozart is already rehearsing.

SALIERI
Incredible.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG
The Emperor has given him permission.

BONNO
Si, si! Veramente.

SALIERI
Well, gentlemen, so be it. In that
case I think we should help Mozart
all we can and do our best to protect
him against the Emperor's anger.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

What anger?

SALIERI

About the ballet.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Ballet? What ballet?

SALIERI

Excuse me - didn't His Majesty
specifically forbid ballet in his
opera?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Yes, absolutely. Is there a ballet
in Figaro?

SALIERI

Yes, in the third act.

CUT TO:

INT. THE OPERA HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S

It is a full orchestral rehearsal. Mozart is conducting from
the harpsichord with his hands; he does not use a baton.
The singers are all in practice clothes, not costumes.

We are in the Act III and we hear the recitativo exchange
just before the march begins. Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno sit
watching chairs.

Suddenly the march starts. Peasants and friends start to
dance in and at the same moment, Orsini-Rosenberg gets up
and comes down to Mozart. He is accompanied by an anxious
Bonno.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Mozart! Herr Mozart, may I have a
word with you please. Right away.

MOZART

Certainly, Herr Director.

He signals to the cast to break off.

MOZART

Five minutes, please!

The company disperses, curious. The musicians look at Orsini-
Rosenberg.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Did you not know that His Majesty
has expressly forbidden ballet in
his operas?

MOZART

Yes, but this is not a ballet. This
is a dance at Figaro's wedding.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Exactly. A dance.

MOZART

But surely the Emperor didn't mean
to prohibit dancing when it's part
of the story.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

It is dangerous for you to interpret
His Majesty's edicts. Give me your
score, please.

Mozart hands him the score from which he is conducting.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Thank you.

He rips out a page. Bonno watches in terror.

MOZART

What are you doing?

He rips out three more.

MOZART

What are you doing, Herr Director?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Taking out what you should never
have put in.

He goes on tearing the pages determinedly.

CUT TO:

INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1780'S

A servant opens the door to announce.

SERVANT

Herr Mozart.

Mozart brushes past him straight towards Salieri, who rises
to greet him. The little man is near hysterics.

MOZART

Please! Please. I've no one else to
turn to. Please!

He grabs Salieri.

SALIERI

Wolfgang, what is it? Sta calmo, per
favore. What's the matter?

MOZART

It's unbelievable! The Director has
actually ripped out a huge section
of my music. Pages of it.

SALIERI

Really? Why?

MOZART

I don't know. They say I've got to
re-write the opera, but it's perfect

as it is. I can't rewrite what's perfect. Can't you talk to him?

SALIERI

Why bother with Orsini-Rosenberg? He's obviously no friend of yours.

MOZART

Oh, I could kill him! I mean really kill him. I actually threw the entire opera on the fire, he made me so angry!

SALIERI

You burned the score?

MOZART

Oh no! My wife took it out in time.

SALIERI

How fortunate.

MOZART

It's not fair that a man like that has power over our work.

SALIERI

But there are those who have power over him. I think I'll take this up with the Emperor.

MOZART

Oh, Excellency, would you?

SALIERI

With all my heart, Mozart.

MOZART

Thank you! Oh, thank you.

He kisses Salieri's hand.

SALIERI

(withdrawing it;
imitating the Emperor)
No, no, no, Herr Mozart, please.
It's not a holy relic.

Mozart giggles with relief and gratitude.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

OLD SALIERI

I'm sure I don't need to tell you I said nothing whatever to the Emperor. I went to the theatre ready to tell Mozart that His Majesty had flown into a rage when I mentioned the ballet, when suddenly, to my astonishment, in the middle of the third act, the Emperor - who never attended rehearsals - suddenly appeared.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY - 1780'S

In the background the same recitativo before the March. The Emperor steals in surreptitiously with Von Strack, his finger to his lips. He motions everyone not to rise, and slips into a chair behind Salieri, Orsini-Rosenberg and Bonno.

The three conspirators look at each other wide-eyed.

The recitativo summons up the march, but instead there is silence. Mozart lays down his baton. The musicians lay down their instruments. The celebrants of Figaro's wedding come in with a few pitiful dance steps, in procession, only to come presently to a halt, lacking their music. The singers try to go on singing, but they have no cues from their conductor or from the accompaniment. Everyone on stage looks lost, though they attempt to go on with the story for a while. Consternation grows on the faces of the conspirators. Mozart glances back at the group seated in the theatre. Finally, the Emperor speaks, in a whisper.

JOSEPH

What is this? I don't understand.
Is it modern?

BONNO

Majesty, the Herr Director, he has removed a ballete that would have occurred at this place.

JOSEPH

Why?

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

It is your regulation, Sire. No ballet in your opera.

Mozart strains to hear what they are saying but cannot.

JOSEPH

Do you like this, Salieri?

SALIERI

It is not a question of liking, Your Majesty. Your own law decrees it, I'm afraid.

JOSEPH

Well, look at them.

We do look at them. The spectacle on stage has now ground to a complete halt.

JOSEPH

No, no, no! This is nonsense. Let me hear the scene with the music.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

But, Sire -

JOSEPH

Oblige me.

Orsini-Rosenberg acknowledges his defeat.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Yes, Majesty.

Orsini-Rosenberg rises and goes down to where Mozart sits anxiously with the musicians, watching his approach.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Can we see the scene with the music back, please?

MOZART

Oh yes, certainly. Certainly, Herr Director!

He looks back deliriously at Salieri, trying to indicate his gratitude. Salieri acknowledges with a slight and subtle nod.

Orsini-Rosenberg returns to his king.

MOZART

Ladies and gentlemen, we're going from where we stopped. The Count: Anches so. Right away, please!

The singers scatter offstage to begin the scene again.

JOSEPH

(to Orsini-Rosenberg)

What I hoped by that edict, Director, was simply to prevent hours of dancing like in French opera. There it is endless, as you know.

ORSINI-ROSENBERG

Quite so, Majesty.

CUT BACK TO Mozart at the forte-piano, raising his hands. The musicians raise their bows. With a flourish the happy composer begins a reprise of the scene which had been cut out. The music of the march begins faintly; the celebrants of Figaro's wedding start to enter as the Count and the Countess sit in their chairs.

In the theatre we see increasing pleasure on the Emperor's face, sullenness and defeat on the courtiers'. Then, suddenly, without interruption, on a crescendo repeat of the march, we

CUT TO:

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

The theatre is brilliantly lit for the first public performance of Figaro. Everybody is there: the Emperor, Von Strack, Bonno Orsini-Rosenberg, Von Swieten, even Madame Weber and her daughters in a box. The musicians all wear imperial livery; the actors on stage are now in costume. Mozart, conducting, wears his Order of the Golden Spur. The company wheels in and around to the music of the restored march, which reaches a triumphant climax.

CUT TO:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

OLD SALIERI

(to Vogler)

So Figaro was produced in spite of me. And in spite of me, a wonder was revealed. One of the true wonders of art. The restored third act was bold and brilliant. The fourth was a miracle.

The descending scale of strings in the final ensemble (Ah, Tutti contenti. Saremo cosi) fades in.

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

We see the tableau on stage with the Count kneeling to the Countess. All are singing.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

I saw a woman disguised in her maid's clothes hear her husband speak the first tender words he has offered her in years, only because he thinks she is someone else. I heard the music of true forgiveness filling the theatre, conferring on all who sat there a perfect absolution. God was singing through this little man to all the world - unstoppable - making my defeat more bitter with each passing bar.

CU, Salieri in his box, tears on his cheeks. He watches the ensemble and we listen to it for a long moment. Finally it fades, but continues underneath the following:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

OLD SALIERI

And then suddenly - a miracle!

CUT BACK TO:

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

The ensemble reaches its climax, and fades away to the very quiet, slow chords immediately preceding the boisterous final chord. Salieri becomes aware that some of the audience are asleep and many more are apathetic. In the near silence we see the Emperor yawn behind his hand. Those nearby look at him. Orsini-Rosenberg smiles.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

OLD SALIERI

Father, did you know what that meant? With that yawn I saw my defeat turn into a victory. And Mozart was lucky the Emperor only yawned once. Three yawns and the opera would fail the same night; two yawns, within a week at most. With one yawn the composer could still get -

CUT TO:

INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1780'S

Mozart is pacing up and down. Salieri is listening sympathetically.

MOZART

Nine performances! Nine! That's all it's had - and withdrawn.

SALIERI

I know; it's outrageous. Still, if the public doesn't like one's work one has to accept the fact gracefully.

MOZART

But what is it they don't like?

SALIERI

Well, I can speak for the Emperor. You made too many demands on the royal ear. The poor man can't concentrate for more than an hour and you gave him four.

MOZART

What did you think of it yourself? Did you like it at all?

SALIERI

I think it's marvelous. Truly.

MOZART

It's the best opera yet written. I know it! Why didn't they come?

SALIERI

I think you overestimate our dear Viennese, my friend. Do you know you didn't even give them a good bang at the end of songs so they knew when to clap?

MOZART

I know, I know. Perhaps you should give me some lessons in that.

SALIERI

(fuming)

I wouldn't presume. All the same, if it wouldn't be imposing, I would like you to see my new piece. It would be a tremendous honour for me.

MOZART

Oh no, the honour would be all mine.

SALIERI

(bowing)

Grazie, mio caro, Wolfgang!

MOZART

Grazie, a lei, Signor Antonio!

He bows too, giggling.

CUT TO:

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

A performance of Salieri's grand opera, Axur: King of Ormus. Deafening applause from a crowded house. We see the reception of the aria which we saw Cavalieri singing on the stage near the start of the film. Cavalieri, in a mythological Persian costume, is bowing to the rapturous throng; below her is Salieri. We see the Emperor, Von Strack, Orsini-Rosenberg, Bonno and Von Swieten, all applauding. We hear great cries of 'Salieri! Salieri!' and 'Bravo!' and 'Brava!'

CU, Salieri looking at the crowd with immense pleasure. Then suddenly at:

CU, Mozart standing in a box and clapping wildly. Behind him, seated, are Schikaneder and the three girls we saw before in Mozart's apartment.

CU, Salieri staring fixedly at Mozart, then Mozart still clapping, apparently with tremendous enthusiasm.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)

What was this? I never saw him excited
before by any music but his own.
Could he mean it?

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

OLD SALIERI

(to Vogler)

Would he actually tell me my music
had moved him? Was I really going to
hear that from his own lips? I found
myself actually hurrying the tempo
of the finale.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

Salieri conducting the last scene from Axur: King of Ormus. On stage we see a big scene of acclamation: the hero and heroine of the opera accepting the crown amidst the rejoicing of the people. The decor and costumes are mythological Persian. The music is utterly conventional and totally uninventive.

CU, Mozart watching this in his box, with Schikaneder and the three actresses. He passes an open bottle of wine to them. He is evidently a little drunk, but keeps a poker face.

The act comes to an end. Great applause in which Mozart joins in, standing and shouting 'Bravo! Bravo!' Then he leaves the box with Schikaneder and the girls.

INT. CORRIDOR OF THE OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

MOZART

(to Schikaneder)

Well?

SCHIKANEDER

(mock moved)
Sublime! Utterly sublime!

MOZART
That kind of music should be
punishable by death.

Schikaneder laughs.

CUT TO:

INT. STAGE OF THE OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

A crowd of people rings Salieri at a respectful distance.
The Emperor is holding out the Civilian Medal and Chain.

JOSEPH
I believe that is the best opera yet
written, my friends. Salieri, you
are the brightest star in the musical
firmament. You do honour to Vienna
and to me.

Salieri bows his head. Joseph places the chain around his
neck. The crowd claps. Salieri makes to kiss his hand, but
Joseph restrains him, and passes on. Cavalieri, smiling
adoringly, gives him a deep curtsey, and he raises her up.

The crowd all flock to Salieri with cries and words of
approval. All want to shake his hand. They tug and pat him.
But he has eyes for only one man - he looks about him,
searching for him and then finds him. Mozart stands there.
Eagerly Salieri moves to him.

SALIERI
Mozart. It was good of you to come.

MOZART
How could I not?

SALIERI
Did my work please you?

MOZART
How could it not, Excellency?

SALIERI
Yes?

MOZART
I never knew that music like that
was possible.

SALIERI
You flatter me.

MOZART
Oh no! One hears such sounds and
what can one say, but - Salieri!

Salieri smiles.

CUT TO:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1780'S

Explosive laughter as Mozart and Schikaneder enter the apartment, very pleased with themselves and accompanied by the three actresses. The front door opens, very gingerly. Mozart, still rather drunk, sticks his head into the room, anxious not to make a noise. He sees the strangers and breaks into a smile.

MOZART

Oh. Everybody's here! We've got guests. Good. I've brought some more.

He opens the door wide to admit Schikaneder and the girls.

MOZART

We'll have a little party. Come in.
Come in. You know Herr Schikaneder?
(to a girl)
This is! a very nice girl.

CONSTANZE

(standing up)
Wolfi.

MOZART

Yes, my love?

CONSTANZE

These gentlemen are from Salzburg.

MOZART

Salzburg. We were just talking about Salzburg.
(to the two men,
jubilantly)
If you've come from my friend the Fartsbishop, you've arrived at just the right moment. Because I've got good news for him. I'm done with Vienna. It's over, finished, done with! Done with! Done with!

CONSTANZE

Wolfi! Your father is dead.

MOZART

What?

CONSTANZE

Your father is dead.

The first loud chord of the Statue scene from Don Giovanni sounds. Mozart stares.

INT. AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

The second chord sounds. On stage we see the huge figure of the Commendatore in robes and helmet, extending his arms and pointing in accusation.

INT. AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

The second chord sounds.

On stage we see a huge nailed fist crash through the wall of

a painted dining room set. The giant armoured statue of the COMMENDATORE enters pointing his finger in accusation at Don Giovanni who sits at the supper table, staring - his servant Leporello quaking with fear under the table.

THE COMMENDATORE
(singing)
Don Giovanni!

The figure advances on the libertine. We see Mozart conducting, pale and deeply involved. Music fades down a little.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)
So rose the dreadful ghost in his
next and blackest opera. There on
the stage stood the figure of a dead
commander calling out 'Repent!
Repent!'

The music swells. We see Salieri standing alone in the back of a box, unseen, in semi-darkness. We also see that the theatre is only half full. Music fades down.

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)
And I knew - only I understood -
that the horrifying apparition was
Leopold, raised from the dead.
Wolfgang had actually summoned up
his own father to accuse his son
before all the world. It was
terrifying and wonderful to watch.

Music swells up again. We watch the scene on stage as the Commendatore addresses Giovanni. Then back to Salieri in the box. Music down again.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

OLD SALIERI
Now a madness began in me. The madness
of a man splitting in half. Through
my influence I saw to it Don Giovanni
was played only five times in Vienna.
But in secret I went to every one of
those five - all alone - unable to
help myself, worshipping sound I
alone seemed to hear.

INT. AN OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT - 1780'S

OLD SALIERI (V.O.)
And hour after hour, as I stood there,
understanding even more clearly how
that bitter old man was still
possessing his poor son from beyond
the grave, I began to see a way - a
terrible way - I could finally triumph
over God, my torturer.

Music swells. On stage Don Giovanni is seized and gripped by the Statue's icy hand. Flames burst from obviously artificial rocks. Demons appear and drag the libertine down to Hell. The scene ends.

CU, Salieri, staring wide-eyed.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - VIENNA - NIGHT - 1780'S

We see huge and attractive posters and billboards advertising Schikaneder's troupe. The camera concentrates on the one which reads as follows:

EMMANUEL SCHIKANEDER
Impresario de luxe
PRESENTS
The Celebrated
SCHIKANEDER TROUPE OF PLAYERS
IN
An Evening of
PARODY
Music! Mirth! Magic!
ALL SONGS AND SPEECHES WRITTEN
BY
EMMANUEL SCHIKANEDER
who personally will appear in every scene!

CUT TO:

INT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1780'S

Noise; smoke; the audience is sitting at tables for an evening of vaudeville. Mozart, Constanze and their son Karl, now about two years old, and sitting on his mother's lap, are watching a parody scene by Schikaneder's troupe. They are rowdy, bawdy and silly, incorporating motifs, situations and tunes from Mozart's operas which we have seen and heard. Before them on the table are bottles of wine and beer, plates of sausages, etc.

THE PARODY

On stage we see a set which parodies the dining room in Don Giovanni's palace, shown before.

Schikaneder as Don Giovanni is dancing with the three actresses to the minuet from Don Giovanni (end of Act I), played by a quartet of tipsy musicians. Leporello is handing around wine on a tray.

Suddenly there is a tremendous knocking from outside. The music slithers to a stop. All look at each other in panic. Leporello drops his tray with a crash. All go quiet. One more knock is heard. Then all musicians, actresses, Don Giovanni and Leporello make a dash to hide under the table which is far too small to accommodate them all. The table rocks. Schikaneder is pushed out. He is terrified. He shakes elaborately. Three more knocks are heard; louder.

SCHIKANEDER

Who is it?

One more knock.

SCHIKANEDER

C-c-c-come in!

In the pit a chromatic scale from the Overture to Don Giovanni

turns into a anticipatory vamp. This grows more and more menacing until the whole flat representing the wall at the back falls down.

An absurd pantomime horse gallops in. It has a ridiculous expression, and is manned by four men inside. Standing precariously on its back is a dwarf, wearing a miniature version of the armour and helmet worn by the Commendatore. He sings in a high, nasal voice:

COMMENDATORE
(singing)
Don Giovannnnnnnnnnni!

He tries to keep his balance as he trots in, but fails. He falls off onto the stage. He beats at the horse, trying to get back on.

COMMENDATORE
Down! Down!

Bewildered, the horse looks about him, but cannot see his small rider who is below his level of sight.

COMMENDATORE
I'm here! I'm here!

The horse, amidst laughter from the audience, fails to locate him. Exasperated, the dwarf signals to someone in the wings. A tall man strides out carrying a see-saw; on his shoulders stands another man.

The dwarf stands on the lowered end of the see-saw. There is a drum roll and the man above jumps down onto the raised end and the Commendatore is abruptly catapulted back onto the horse, only backwards so that he is facing away from Don Giovanni. The two men bow to the applauding audience, and retire off-stage.

The Commendatore tries to extend his arms in the proper menacing attitude, and at the same time turn around to face Don Giovanni. This he finds difficult.

COMMENDATORE
(singing)
Don Giovannnnnnnnni!

SCHIKANEDER
Who the devil are you? What do you want?

COMMENDATORE
(singing)
I've come to dinnnnnner!

SCHIKANEDER
Dinner? How dare you? I am a nobleman.
I only dine with people of my own height.

COMMENDATORE
Are you drunk? You invited me. And my horse. Here he is. Ottavio!

The horse takes a bow. The dwarf almost falls off again.

COMMENDATORE

Whoa! Whoa! Stop it!

The three girls rush to his aid and reach him just in time.
They sing in the manner of the Tree Ladies later to be put
into The Magic Flute.

FIRST LADY

(running and singing)

Be careful!

SECOND LADY

(running and singing)

Be careful!

THIRD LADY

(running and singing)

Be careful!

ALL THREE TOGETHER

(close harmony)

Hold tight now!

They grab him.

COMMENDATORE

(angry)

Leave me alone! Stop it! I'm a famous
horseman.

OTTAVIO

And I'm a famous horse!

He gives the ladies a radiant smile. The three ladies sing,
as before, in close harmony.

FIRST LADY

(singing)

He's adorable!

SECOND LADY

(singing)

Adorable!

THIRD LADY

(singing)

Adorable!

An orchestral chord. The three ladies turn to Ottavio and
sing to him.

THREE LADIES

(singing together)

Give me your hoof, my darling, And
I'll give you my heart! Take me to
your stable, And never more we'll
part!

OTTAVIO

(singing: four male
voices)

I'm shy and very bashful. I don't
know what to say.

THREE LADIES

(singing together)

Don't hesitate a second. Just answer
yes and neigh.

Ottavio neighs loudly, and runs at the girls.

COMMENDATORE

(speaking)

Stop it. What are you doing? Remember
who you are! You're a horse and they
are whores.

Boos from the audience.

SHIKANEDER

(speaking)

This is ridiculous. I won't have any
of it. You're turning my house into
a circus!

A trapeze sails in from above. On it stands a grand soprano
wearing an elaborate Turkish costume, like a parody of
Cavalieri's in Il Seraglio. She comes in singing a mad
coloratura scale in the manner of Martern aller Arten.

SHIKANEDER

(speaking)

Shut up. Women, women, women! I'm
sick to death of them.

He marches off stage.

SOPRANO

(singing dramatically)

Dash me! Bash me! Lash me! Flay me!
Slay me! At last I will be freed by
death!

COMMENDATORE

Shut up.

SOPRANO

(swinging and singing)

Kill me! Kill me! Kill me! Kill me!
At last I shall be freed by death.
At last I shall be freed by dea -

The Commendatore pulls out his sword, reaches up and thrusts
her through with it. The soprano collapses on the bar of the
trapeze. The audience applauds. At the same moment eight
dwarves march in bearing a huge cauldron of steaming water.
They sing as they march to the sound of the march that was
cut from Act III of Figaro. They are dressed as miniature
copies of the chorus in that scene except that they are
wearing cooks' hats.

EIGHT DWARVES

(singing)

We're going to make a soprano stew!
We're going to make a soprano stew!
And when you make a soprano stew!
Any stupid soprano will do! Any stew-
stew-stew-stew-stew! Any stewpid
soprano will do!

They set the giant pot down in the middle of the stage. The trapeze with the dead soprano is still swinging above the stage.

We hear the chromatic scale from the Don Giovanni overture again, repeated and repeated, only now fast and tremolando. To this exciting vamp Schikaneder suddenly rides in on a real horse, waving a real sword. With this he cuts the string of the trapeze, and the soprano falls into the pot. A tremendous splash of water. Schikaneder rides out. More applause.

All the dwarves produce long wooden cooking spoons and climb up the sides of the pot. The three girls produce labeled bottles from under their skirts. The first is SALT.

FIRST LADY

(singing)

Behold!

PEPPER

SECOND LADY

(singing)

Behold!

She sneezes.

AND SCHNAPPS

THIRD LADY

(singing)

Behold!

She hiccups.

They throw them into the pot.

COMMENDATORE

(speaking to the
dwarves)

How long does it take to cook a
soprano?

DWARVES

(all together)

Five hours, five minutes, five
seconds.

COMMENDATORE

(speaking)

I can't wait that long. I'm starving!

OTTAVIO

(speaking; four voices)

So am I.

Schikaneder marches in as Figaro.

SCHIKANEDER

(singing to the tune
of Non piu ante)

In the pot, I have got a good dinner.
Not a sausage or stew, but a singer.

Not a sausage or stew but a singer.
Is the treat that I'll eat for my
meat!

COMMENDATORE

Oh shut up. I'm sick to death of
that tune.

CU, Mozart laughing delightedly with the audience.

THE THREE GIRLS

(singing again to the
horse)

Give me your hoof, my darling, and
I'll give you my heart.

COMMENDATORE

Shut up. I'm sick of that one too.

All the dwarves climb up the rim of the pot. As they climb,
they all hum together the opening of Eine Kleine Nachtmusik.

COMMENDATORE

And that one, too!

The soprano rises, dripping with water in the middle of the
pot.

SOPRANO

(singing)

Oil me! Broil me! Boil me!

All the dwarves beat her back down into the pot with their
long wooden spoons.

SOPRANO

(from inside the pot)

Soil me! Foil me! Spoil me!

HORSE

I can't eat her. Sopranos give me
hiccups. I want some hay!

FIRST LADY

(singing to Schikaneder)

Hey!

SECOND LADY

(singing to Schikaneder)

Hey!

THIRD LADY

(singing to Schikaneder)

Hey!

SCHIKANEDER

Hey what?

ALL THREE LADIES

(singing to La oi
daram)

Give him some hay, my darling, and
I'll give you my heart!

COMMENDATORE

Shut up.

SCHIKANEDER

Leporello! We want some hay -
prestissimo! Leporello - where are
you?

The table is raised in the air by Leporello sitting under it
on a bale of hay.

FIRST LADY

(singing to horse)
Behold!

SECOND LADY

(singing to horse)
Behold!

THIRD LADY

(singing to horse)
Behold!

Ottavio the horse gives a piercing neigh and runs down to
the hay.

COMMENDATORE

(holding on)
Hey! Hey! Watch out!

The vamp starts again vigorously. The horse's rear-end swings
around on a hinge to turn his hind-quarters straight on to
the audience. The rest of him stays sideways. His tail springs
up in the air to reveal a lace handkerchief modestly hiding
his arsehole.

Schikaneder offers him a handful of hay. The horse eats it,
and out the other end comes a long Viennese sausage. The
audience roars with laughter. Another handful of hay and out
of the other end falls a string of sausages. Then a large
pie, crust and all. Then a shower of iced cakes!

Suddenly - silence. Schikaneder produces an egg from his
pocket. Ottavio the horse rears up in disgust.

COMMENDATORE

Whoa! Whoa, Ottavio! Whoa!

Leporello pries open the horse's mouth. Schikaneder pops the
egg into it. A breathless pause as a drum roll builds the
tension, up and up and up, and then suddenly out of the
horse's rear-end flies a single white dove.

Wild applause.

It flies into the audience. Immediately all the cast start
humming the lyrical finale from Figaro: Tutti Contenti.
More and more doves fly out from the wings and fill the
theatre. Everybody picks up the sausages and cakes and begins
to eat. The end of the sketch is unexpectedly lyrical and
magical, and then, suddenly, the tempo changes and the coarse
strains of Ich Mochte wohl Der Kaiser take over and the whole
company is dancing, frantically. A general dance as the
curtain falls.

It rises immediately. The audience - including Mozart - is

delighted. They applaud vigorously. Schikaneder takes a bow amongst his troupe. Among much whistling and clapping, he finally jumps off the stage and strides through the audience toward the table where Mozart sits with his family. On stage, a troupe of bag pipers immediately appears to play an old German tune. Some of the audience joins in singing it.

SCHIKANEDER

Well, how do you like that?

Mozart is smiling; he has been amused. Constanze has been less amused and is looking apprehensive.

MOZART

Wonderful!

(indicating his baby
son)

He liked the monkey, didn't you?

SCHIKANEDER

Yes, well, it's all good fun.

MOZART

I liked the horse.

Schikaneder sits at the table, and drinks from a bottle of wine.

SCHIKANEDER

Isn't he marvelous? He cost me a bundle, that horse, but he's worth it. I tell you, if you'd played Don Giovanni here it would have been a great success. I'm not joking. These people aren't fools. You could do something marvelous for them.

MOZART

I'd like to try them someday. I'm not sure I'd be much good at it.

SCHIKANEDER

'Course you would. You belong here, my boy, not the snobby Court. You could do anything you felt like here - the more fantastic the better! That's what people want, you know: fantasy. You do a big production, fill it with beautiful magic tricks and you'll be absolutely free to do anything you want. Of course, you'd have to put a fire in it, because I've got the best fire machine in the city and a big flood - I can do you the finest water effects you ever saw in your life. Oh, and a few trick animals. You'd have to use those.

MOZART

Animals?

SCHIKANEDER

I tell you I picked up a snake in Dresden last week - twelve foot long - folds up to six inches, just like a

paper fan. It's a miracle.

Mozart laughs.

SCHIKANEDER

I'm serious. You write a proper part for me with a couple of catchy songs, I'll guarantee you'll have a triumph-de-luxe. Mind you, it'll have to be in German.

MOZART

German!

SCHIKANEDER

Of course! What else do you think they speak here?

MOZART

No, no, I love that. I'd want it to be in German. I haven't done anything in German since Seraglio.

SCHIKANEDER

So there you are. What do you say?

CONSTANZE

How much will you pay him?

SCHIKANEDER

Ah. Well. Ah,

(to Mozart)

I see you've got your manager with you. Well, Madame, how about half the receipts?

MOZART

Half the receipts! Stanzi!

CONSTANZE

I'm talking about now. How much will you give him now? Down payment?

SCHIKANEDER

Down payment? Who do you think I am? The Emperor? Whoops, I have to go.

He rises in haste for his next number.

SCHIKANEDER

Stay where you are. You're going to like this next one. We'll speak again. Triumph-de-luxe, my boy!

He winks at Mozart and disappears toward the stage. Mozart looks after him, enchanted.

CONSTANZE

You're not going to do this?

MOZART

Why not? Half the house!

CONSTANZE

When? We need money now. Either he

pays now, or you don't do it.

MOZART

Oh, Stanzi.

CONSTANZE

I don't trust this man. And I didn't like what he did with your opera. It was common.

MOZART

(to Karl)

Well, you liked it, didn't you? Monkey-flunki-punki.

CONSTANZE

Half the house! You'll never see a penny. I want it here, in my hand.

MOZART

(dirty)

Stanzi-manzi, I'll put it in your hand!

CONSTANZE

Shut up! I'll not let you put anything in my hand until I see some money.

He giggles like a child.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHLUMBERG HOUSE - HALLWAY - DAY 1780'S

Dogs are barking wickedly. Michael Schlumberg comes in from his salon. Mozart stands there looking very unwell and bewildered. He is also drunk, but making a careful attempt to keep his composure.

SCHLUMBERG

Herr Mozart. What a surprise. What can I do for you?

MOZART

Is my pupil still anxious to learn the art of music?

SCHLUMBERG

Well, your pupil is married and living in Mannheim, young man.

MOZART

Really? Perhaps your dear wife might care to profit from my instruction?

SCHLUMBERG

What is this, Mozart? What's the matter with you?

MOZART

Well. Since it appears nobody is eager to hire my services, could you favour me with a little money instead?

SCHLUMBERG

What for?

MOZART

If a man cannot earn, he must borrow.

SCHLUMBERG

Well, this is hardly the way to go about it.

MOZART

No doubt, sir. But I am endowed with talent, and you with money. If I offer mine, you should offer yours.

Pause.

SCHLUMBERG

I'm sorry. No.

MOZART

Please. I'll give it back, I promise. Please, sir.

SCHLUMBERG

My answer is no, Mozart.

CU, Mozart. His voice becomes mechanical.

MOZART

Please. Please. Please. Please. Please. Please.

CUT TO:

INT. THE IMPERIAL LIBRARY - DAY - 1790'S

Von Swieten and Salieri stand close together. Several scholars and students are examining scrolls and manuscripts at the other end of the room.

VON SWIETEN

(keeping his voice down)

This is embarrassing, you know. You introduced Mozart to some of my friends and he's begging from practically all of them. It has to stop.

SALIERI

I agree, Baron.

VON SWIETEN

Can't you think of anyone who might commission some work from him? I've done my best. I got him to arrange some Bach for my Sunday concerts. He got a fee - what I could afford. Can't you think of anyone who might do something for him?

SALIERI

No, Baron, no. I'm afraid Mozart is a lost cause. He has managed to alienate practically the whole of

Vienna. He is constantly drunk. He never pays his debts. I can't think of one person to whom I dare recommend him.

VON SWIETEN

How sad. It's tragic, isn't it?
Such a talent.

SALIERI

Indeed. Just a moment - as a matter of fact I think I do know someone who could commission a work from him. A very appropriate person to do so. Yes.

The opening measures of the Piano Concerto in D Minor steal in.

CUT TO:

INT. THE COSTUME SHOP - VIENNA - DAY - 1790'S

This is exactly the same shop which Mozart and Constanze visited with Leopold. Now Salieri's servant stands in it, waiting. We see a few other customers being served by the staff: renting masks, costumes, etc. One of the staff emerges from the back of the shop carrying a large box, which he hands to Salieri's servant. The servant leaves the shop. Through the window we see him hurrying away through the snowy street full of passers-by, carriages, etc.

INT. SALIERI'S APARTMENT - DUSK - 1790'S

The D Minor Concerto continues. Salieri, alone, eagerly opens the box from the costume shop and takes out the same dark cloak and hat that Leopold wore to the masquerade, only now attached to the hat is a dark mask whose mouth is cut into a frown, not a laugh. It presents a bitter and menacing expression. He puts on the cloak, the hat and the mask and turns his back. Suddenly we see the assembled and alarming image reflected in a full-length mirror. The music swells darkly.

CUT TO:

EXT. A SNOWY STREET IN VIENNA - DUSK - 1790'S

As the tutti of the D Minor Concerto continues, we see Salieri, dressed in this menacing costume, dark against the snow, stalking through a street which is otherwise lively with people going to various festivities. Some of them wear frivolous carnival clothes.

INT. MOZART'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK - 1790'S

Mozart sits writing at a table. He appears now to be really quite sick. His face expresses pain from his stomach cramps. There is a gentle knock at the door. He rises, goes to the door and opens it. Immediately there is a SHOCK CUT:

The dark, frowning mask stares at him and at us. The violent D Minor chord which opens Don Giovanni is heard. Salieri in costume stands in the doorway.

SALIERI

Herr Mozart?

The second chord sounds and fades. Mozart stares in panic.

SALIERI

I have come to commission work from you.

MOZART

What work?

SALIERI

A Mass for the dead.

MOZART

What dead? Who is dead?

SALIERI

A man who deserved a Requiem Mass and never got one.

MOZART

Who are you?

SALIERI

I am only a messenger. Do you accept? You will be paid well.

MOZART

How much?

Salieri extends his hand. In it is a bag of money.

SALIERI

Fifty ducats. Another fifty when I have the Mass. Do you accept?

Almost against his will, Mozart takes the money.

MOZART

How long will you give me?

SALIERI

Work fast. And be sure to tell no one what you do. You will see me again soon.

He turns away. Mozart closes the front door. Instantly we hear the opening of the Requiem Mass (also in D Minor). Mozart turns and looks up at the portrait of his father on the wall. The portrait stares back. Constanze opens the door from the bedroom. She sees him staring up.

CONSTANZE

Wolfi? Wolfi!

He looks at her with startled eyes. The music breaks off.

CONSTANZE

Who was that?

MOZART

No one.

CONSTANZE

I heard voices.

He gives a strange little giggle.

CONSTANZE

What's the matter?

She sees the bag of money.

CONSTANZE

What's that? Oh!

(pouncing on it)

Who gave you this? How much is it?

Wolfi, who gave you this?

MOZART

I'm not telling you.

CONSTANZE

Why not?

MOZART

You'd think I was mad.

He stares at her. She stares at him.

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - 1823

Old Salieri is now wildly animated, totally driven by his confession to Vogler.

OLD SALIERI

My plan was so simple, it terrified me. First I must get the Death Mass and then achieve the death.

Vogler stares at him in horror.

VOGLER

What?

OLD SALIERI

His funeral - imagine it! The Cathedral, all Vienna sitting there. His coffin, Mozart's little coffin in the middle. And suddenly in that silence, music. A divine music bursts out over them all, a great Mass of Death: Requiem Mass for Wolfgang Mozart, composed by his devoted friend Antonio Salieri. What sublimity! What depth! What passion in the music! Salieri has been touched by God at last. And God, forced to listen. Powerless - powerless to stop it. I at the end, for once, laughing at Him. Do you understand? Do you?

VOGLER

Yes.

OLD SALIERI

The only thing that worried me was the actual killing. How does one do

that? How does one kill a man? It's
one thing to dream about it. It's
very different when you have to do
it, with your own hands.

He raises his own hands and stares at them. The raging Dies
Irae from Mozart's Requiem Mass bursts upon us.

CUT TO:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

Mozart sits working frantically at this demonic music. His
whole expression is one of wildness and engulfing fever. He
pours wine down his throat, spilling it, and grimaces as it
hits his stomach. All around him are manuscripts.

There is a banging at the front door. Mozart does not hear
it; the music raves on. Another knocking comes, louder.
Constanze appears from the bedroom and stares at her
distracted husband. The knocking is repeated again, even
more violently and insistently.

CONSTANZE

Wolfi. Wolfi!

He looks at her. The music breaks off. Silence. An enormous
bang at the door startles him.

Constanze moves to open it.

MOZART

No. Don't answer it!

CONSTANZE

Why?

Mozart springs up. He is clearly terrified.

MOZART

Tell him I'm not here. Tell him I'm
working on it. Come back later.

He runs out of the room, into his workroom, and shuts the door.
Now a little scared herself, Constanze goes to the front door
and opens it cautiously. Schikaneder stands there, floridly
dressed as usual. Lohl is seen peeking out from the kitchen.

SCHIKANEDER

Am I interrupting something?

CONSTANZE

Not at all.

SCHIKANEDER

(peering into the room)
Where's our friend?

CONSTANZE

He's not in. But he's working on it.
He said to tell you.

SCHIKANEDER

I hope so. I need it immediately.

He pushes her into the room.

SCHIKANEDER
Is he happy with it?

He sees the manuscript on the table, and goes to it eagerly.

SCHIKANEDER
Is this it?

He picks up a page without waiting for a reply.

SCHIKANEDER
What the devil is this? Requiem Mass?
Does he think I'm in the funeral
business?

Mozart opens the workroom door. We see him as Schikaneder
sees him: wild-eyed, extremely pale and strange.

MOZART
Leave that alone!

SCHIKANEDER
Wolfi!

MOZART
Put it down!

SCHIKANEDER
What is this?

MOZART
Put it down, I said! It's nothing
for you.

SCHIKANEDER
Oh! I'm sorry! I'm sorry! What have
you got for me? Is it finished?

MOZART
What?

SCHIKANEDER
What? The vaudeville, what'd you
think?

MOZART
Yes.

SCHIKANEDER
Can I see it?

MOZART
No.

SCHIKANEDER
Why not?

MOZART
Because there's nothing to see.

He giggles triumphantly. Schikaneder stares at him.

SCHIKANEDER

Look, I asked you if we could start rehearsal next week and you said yes.

MOZART

Well, we can.

SCHIKANEDER

So let me see it. Where is it?

Mozart, with a bright, rather demented smile presents his head to Schikaneder.

MOZART

Here. It's all right here, in my noodle. The rest is just scribbling. Scribbling and bibbling. Bibbling and scribbling. Would you like a drink?

He giggles. Schikaneder suddenly grabs his lapels.

SCHIKANEDER

Look, you little clown, do you know how many people I've hired for you? Do you know how many people are waiting?

CONSTANZE

Leave him alone!

SCHIKANEDER

I'm paying these people. Do you realize that?

CONSTANZE

He's doing his best.

SCHIKANEDER

I'm paying people just to wait for you. It's ridiculous!

CONSTANZE

You know what's ridiculous? Your libretto, that's what's ridiculous. Only an idiot would ask Wolfi to work on that stuff!

SCHIKANEDER

Oh yes? And what's so intelligent about writing a Requiem?

CONSTANZE

Money! Money!

SCHIKANEDER

You're mad! She's mad, Wolfi.

CONSTANZE

Oh yes, and who are you? He's worked for Kings. For the Emperor.

(shouting)

Who are you?

Schikaneder suddenly takes Mozart by the arms, and speaks to

him with intense appeal.

SCHIKANEDER

Listen, Wolfi. Write it. Please.
Just write it down. On paper. It's
no good to anyone in your head. And
fuck the Death Mass.

INT. SALIERI'S SALON - DAY - 1790'S

A frightened and tearful Lorl sits before Salieri.

SALIERI

Now calm yourself. Calm. What's the
matter with you?

LORL

I'm leaving. I'm not working there
anymore. I'm scared!

SALIERI

Why? What has happened?

LORL

You don't know what it's like. Herr
Mozart frightens me. He drinks all
day, then takes all that medicine
and it makes him worse.

SALIERI

What medicine?

LORL

I don't know. He has pains.

SALIERI

Where?

LORL

Here, in his stomach. They bend him
right over.

SALIERI

Is he working?

LORL

I'm frightened, sir. Really! When he
speaks, he doesn't make any sense.
You know he said he saw - he said he
saw his father. And his father's
dead.

SALIERI

Is he working?

LORL

I suppose so. He sits there all he
time, doing some silly opera.

SALIERI

(startled)
Opera? Opera!

LORL

Please don't ask me to go back again.

I'm frightened! I'm very, very
frightened.

SALIERI
(insistently)
Are you sure it's an opera?

The Overture to The Magic Flute begins grandly. To the music
of the slow introduction, we see:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

The room, lit by a few candles, appears dirty. The camera
shows us again Leopold's portrait on the wall, looking down
upon a scene of disorder.

Papers litter the table; dirty dishes are piled in the
fireplace; on the forte-piano lies Mozart's Masonic apron,
woven with symbols. To the more lyrical passage of the
introduction, we see Mozart take up a candle and enter:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

We watch him stand beside Constanze, who lies asleep. Mozart
now looks very ill; his wife appears worn out. Tenderly he
touches her hair. Then he moves to the cot where his son
Karl lies asleep and kneels, pulls up the child's little
blanket and for a moment lays his own head down beside the
boy's. Constanze opens her eyes and stares at him. Mozart
rises and returns to:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

The Introduction ends and suddenly the brilliant fast fugue
begins. Instantly Mozart starts to dance to it, all alone:
gleefully, like a child. He looks up at his father's portrait,
and makes a silly, rude gesture at it. He is, briefly, an
irresponsible and happy boy again.

Then suddenly there is a gentle knocking at the door. The
music fades down. Warily, Mozart crosses and opens the door.
The familiar dark chords from Don Giovanni cut across the
happy music. It ends. Before him stands the masked stranger.

MOZART
I don't have it yet. It's not
finished. I'm sorry, but I need more
time.

SALIERI
Are you neglecting my request?

MOZART
No, no! I promise you, I'll give you
a wonderful piece - the best I ever
can!

He turns and looks. Constanze has come into the living room.
Nervously, Mozart indicates her.

MOZART
This is my wife, Stanzi. I've been
sick, but I'm all right now. Aren't
I?

CONSTANZE

Oh yes, sir. He's all right. And he's working on it very hard.

MOZART

Give me two more weeks. Please.

Salieri contemplates them both.

SALIERI

The sooner you finish, the better your reward. Work!

He turns and goes down the stairs. Mozart shuts the door; he closes his eyes in fear.

CONSTANZE

Wolfi, I think you really are going mad. You work like a slave for that idiot actor who won't give you a penny and here. This is not a ghost! This is a real man who puts down real money. Why on earth don't you finish it?

He will not look at her or reply.

CONSTANZE

Give me one reason I can understand.

MOZART

I can't write it!

CONSTANZE

Why not?

MOZART

It's killing me.

He looks at her suddenly.

CONSTANZE

No, this is really awful. You're drunk, aren't you? Be honest - tell me - you've been drinking. And I'm so stupid I stay here and listen to you!

Suddenly she starts to cry.

CONSTANZE

It's not fair! I worry about you all the time. I try to help you all I can and you just drink and talk nonsense and - and frighten me! It's not fair!

Her tears flow. Mozart looks at her helplessly.

MOZART

Go back to bed.

CONSTANZE

Please! Let me sit here. Let me stay here with you. I promise I won't say

all word. I'll just be here, so you
know no one's going to hurt you.
Please, please!

She sits down tearfully, staring at him.

We hear the Rex Tremendai Majestatis from the Requiem and see on the wall the portrait of Leopold Mozart looking down. The camera pans slowly downward from it back to the table. Mozart is writing the music. He looks up and sees that Constanze is fast asleep in her chair. Mozart gets up quietly. He puts on his hat and cloak, takes a bottle of wine and tiptoes from the house. Without stopping, the music changes from the heavy Requiem to the light-hearted patter of the Papa-Papa duet from The Magic Flute.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHIKANEDER'S SUMMER HOUSE - NIGHT - 1790'S

This little wooden structure stands in a courtyard in the tenement by the Weiden. Inside, we see a table, chairs, a forte-piano, bottles and a chaos of papers. Strewn about in the chairs are the three actresses, giggling. Schikaneder and Mozart, both drunk, are singing the duet of the two bird-people. The actor sings Papageno and the composer, in a soprano voice, sings Papagena at the keyboard. Absurdly, they end up rubbing noses and fall on each other's necks.

EXT. VIENNA STREET - NIGHT - 1790'S

Mozart, drunk and happy, staggers back through the snow. There are a few people about. He goes into his apartment building.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - DAY - 1790'S

He comes through the door and stares across the living room at an open bedroom door. Puzzled, he crosses.

The bedroom is also empty. We see Constanze's empty bed; Karl's empty bed; empty closets.

MOZART

Stanzi? Stanzi-marini-bini?

He looks about him, puzzled.

INT. FRAU WEBER'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY - 1790'S

Frau Weber sits grimly talking. Mozart sits also, completely exhausted and passive under the rain of her constant speech.

FRAU WEBER

She's not coming back, you know.
She's gone for good. I did it and
I'm proud of it. 'Leave,' I said.
'Right away! Take the child and go,
just go. Here's the money! Go to the
Spa and get your health back - that's
if you can.' I was shocked. Shocked
to my foundation. Is that my girl?
Can that be my Stanzi? The happy
little moppet I brought up, that
poor trembling thing? Oh, you monster!

No one exists but you, do they? You
and your music! Do you know how often
she's sat in that very chair, weeping
her eyes out of her head because of
you? I warned her. 'Choose a man,
not a baby,' I said. But would she
listen? Who listens? 'He's just a
silly boy,' she says. Silly, my arse.
Selfish - that's all you are. Selfish!
Selfish, selfish, selfish, selfish,
selfish.

And with a scream Madame Weber's voice turns into the shrill
packing coloratura of the second act aria of the Queen of
the Night, in The Magic Flute.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S

On stage we see the QUEEN OF THE NIGHT fantastically costumed,
furiously urging her daughter to kill Sarastro. As she sings,
we see the interior of the theatre, now re-arranged from
when we last visited it to watch the Cabaret. An audience of
ordinary German citizens stands in the pit area, or sits:
they are rapt and excited.

The theatre also possesses boxes; some of these show closed
curtains - their inhabitants presumably engaged in private
intimacies. In one of them sits Salieri.

QUEEN OF THE NIGHT
(singing furiously)
A hellish wrath within my heart is
seething! Death and destruction Flame
around my throne! If not by thee
Sarastro's light be extinguished.
Then be thou mine own daughter never
more! Rejected be forever! So sundered
be forever All the bonds of kin and
blood! Hear! Hear! Hear God of
Vengeance! Hear thy Mother's vow!

Thunder and lightning. She disappears amidst tremendous
applause from the audience.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S

On the poster for The Magic Flute, the name Emmanuel
Schikaneder should appear very, very large and the name of
Mozart quite small:

I. & R. priv. Weiden Theatre
The Actors of the Imperial and Royal
Privileged Theatre of the Weiden
Have the honour to perform
THE MAGIC FLUTE
A Grand Opera in Two Acts
By
Emmanuel Schikaneder
(The Cast List)

The music is by Herr Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Herr Mozart

out of respect for a gracious and honourable Public, and from friendship for the author of this piece, will today direct the orchestra in person.

The book of the opera, furnished with two copperplates, of which is engraved Herr Schikaneder in the costume he wears for the role of Papageno, may be had at the box office for 30 kr.

Prices of admission are as usual To begin at 7 o'clock

INT. STAGE, AUDITORIUM AND WINGS OF SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT -1790'S

We CUT TO the scene immediately before Papageno's song, Ein Madchen oder Weibchen. Papageno, played by Schikaneder, dressed in his costume of feathers, is trying to get through a mysterious door. A voice calls from within.

VOICE

Go back!

Papageno recoils.

PAPAGENO

Merciful Gods! If only I knew by which door I came in.

(to audience)

Which was it? Was it this one? Come on, tell me!

VOICE

Go back!

Papageno recoils.

PAPAGENO

Now, I can't go forward and I can't go back. Oh, this is awful!

He weeps extravagantly.

In the pit, Mozart indicates to the first violinist to take over as conductor. He slips from his place and goes stealthily backstage. We follow him. Over the scene we hear Papageno being addressed by the First Priest in stern tones.

FIRST PRIEST

(on stage)

Man, thou hast deserved to wander forever in the darkest chasms of the earth. The gentle Gods have remitted thy punishment, but yet thou shalt never feel the Divine Content of the consecrated ones.

PAPAGENO

Oh well, I'm not alone in that. Just give me a decent glass of wine - that's divine content enough for me.

Laughter. An enormous goblet of wine appears out of the earth.

We follow Mozart into the wings. Actors and actresses stand around in fantastic costumes. We see a flying chariot and

parts of a huge snake lying about. Also the scenery door of a temple with the word 'Wisdom' inscribed on the pediment. Mozart walks to where there stands a keyboard glockenspiel with several manuals, and a musician waiting to play it. Silently Mozart indicates that he wishes to play the instrument himself.

On stage Schikaneder is being addressed haughtily by the First Priest.

FIRST PRIEST

Man, hast thou no other desire on earth, but just to eat and drink?

PAPAGENO

(Schikaneder)

Well!

Laughter from the audience.

PAPAGENO

Well, actually I do have a rather weird feeling in my heart. Perhaps it's just indigestion. But you know, I really would like - I really do want - something even nicer than food and drink. Now what on earth could that be?

He stares at the audience and winks at them. They laugh.

Now Papageno's aria (Ein Madchen oder Weibchen) begins. It is interpolated, as he pretends to play his magic bells, with the glockenspiel actually being played off-stage by Mozart. Schikaneder looks into the pit and does not see Mozart conducting. He looks into the wings and realizes the situation with amusement. He sings joyfully and the audience watches entranced.

ANDANTE

A sweetheart or a pretty little wife is Papageno's wish. A willing, billing, lovey dovey Would be My most tasty little dish. Be my most tasty little dish! Be my most tasty little dish!

ALLEGRO

Then that would be eating and drinking I'd live like a Prince without thinking. The wisdom of old would be mine - A woman's much better than wine! Then that would be eating and drinking! The wisdom of old would be mine - A woman's much better than wine. She's much better than wine! She's much better than wine!

ANDANTE

(encore, lightly, as before)

A sweetheart or a pretty little wife is Papageno's wish. A willing, billing, lovey dovey Would be My most tasty little dish.

ALLEGRO

I need to net one birdie only And I
will stop feeling so lonely. But if
she won't fly to my aid, Then into a
ghost I must fade. I need to net one
birdie only But if she won't fly to
my aid, Then into a ghost I must
fade. To a ghost I must fade! To a
ghost I must fade!

ANDANTE

(encore)

A sweetheart or a pretty little wife
is Papageno's wish. A willing,
biling, lovey dovey Would be My
most tasty little dish.

ALLEGRO

At present the girls only peck me.
Their cruelty surely will wreck me.
But one little beak in my own, And
I'll up to heaven be flown! At present
the girls only peck me. But one little
beak in my own, And I'll up to heaven
be flown. Up to heaven be flown! Up
to heaven be flown!

At certain moments we see the stage from Salieri's point of view: Schikaneder singing, then pretending to play; and then we see Mozart playing the glockenspiel with great flourishes in the wings. Then, suddenly, the actor mimes playing, and no sound comes. He mimes again, but still nothing comes. He looks offstage in anxiety; there is evidently some commotion. People are looking down on the floor. The song comes to a near-halt. Schikaneder stares. Then the comedian signals to the deputy conductor to pick up the song and finish it. At this moment Salieri gets up and hastily leaves his box.

CUT TO:

INT. WINGS OF SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S

We see the actress playing Papagena, wearing an old tattered cloak and about to tie a little painted cloth representing a hideous old woman over her face. She is looking worriedly down at Mozart, who is lying unconscious on the floor.

A few people around him are trying to revive him. One has put a wet handkerchief around his temples. Another is holding a small bottle of smelling salts. There are voices saying, 'Doctor! Take him to a dressing room. Someone call a carriage. Take him home.' Etc. Papagena is urged to go on stage by a distracted stage manager. Suddenly we hear the voice of Salieri.

SALIERI

I'll take care of him.

He steps forward.

SALIERI

I have a carriage. Excuse me.

The actors step back respectfully. He stoops and picks up

the frail composer in his arms. Mozart is quite limp and Salieri has to fling his arms around his own neck. All this is watched nervously by Schikaneder on stage whilst performing his scene with Papagena as an ugly old woman.

UGLY OLD WOMAN

Here I am, my angel.

PAPAGENO

(appalled)

What? Who the devil are you?

UGLY OLD WOMAN

I've taken pity on you, my angel. I heard your wish.

PAPAGENO

Oh. Well, thank you! How wonderful. Some people get all the luck.

Audience laughter. The actress raises the little painted cloth with the ugly old face on it to show her own pretty young one to the audience. More laughter.

UGLY OLD WOMAN

Now you've got to promise me faithfully you'll remain true to me forever. Then you'll see how tenderly your little birdie will love you.

PAPAGENO

(nervous)

I can't wait.

UGLY OLD WOMAN

Well, promise then.

PAPAGENO

What do you mean - now?

UGLY OLD WOMAN

Of course now. Right away, before I get any older.

Laughter.

PAPAGENO

Well, I don't know! I mean you're a delicious, delightful, delectable little bird, but don't you think you might be just a little tough?

UGLY OLD WOMAN

(amorously)

Oh, I'm tender enough for you, my boy. I'm tender enough for you.

Laughter.

EXT. SCHIKANEDER'S THEATRE - NIGHT - 1790'S

A waiting sedan chair. Mozart has recovered consciousness, but looks exceedingly ill. Salieri has set him down in the winter's night. Snow is falling.

MOZART

What happened? Is it over?

SALIERI

I'm taking you home. You're not well.

MOZART

No, no. I have to get back. I have -

He starts to collapse again. Salieri helps him into the sedan. The door is shut. The chair sets off and Salieri strides beside it, through the mean street. A lantern with a candle swings from the chair.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

The door opens. Salieri enters carrying the lantern from the sedan chair. He is followed by Mozart, carried in the arms of one of the porters. The room is now really in complete disarray. The table is piled high with music: the pages of the Requiem lie amongst many empty wine bottles. The porter carries Mozart into

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

This room is miserably neglected. The bed is unmade, clothes lie about on the floor. A sock has been stuck into the broken pane of one window.

The porter lays Mozart down on the bed as Salieri lights candles from the lantern to reveal plates of half-eaten food and other signs left by a man whose wife has departed. It is obviously very cold. Another very small bed nearby belongs to the child, Karl.

SALIERI

(handing the porter
the lantern)

Thank you. Go.

The porter leaves the room. Mozart stirs.

MOZART

(vaguely singing)

Papa! Papa!

He opens his eyes and sees Salieri staring down at him. He smiles.

SALIERI

Come now.

He helps him to sit up and takes off his coat and his shoes and puts a coverlet around him.

SALIERI

Where is your wife?

MOZART

Not here! She's not well, either.
She went to the Spa.

SALIERI

You mean she's not coming back?

MOZART

You're so good to me. Truly. Thank you.

SALIERI

No, please.

MOZART

I mean to come to my opera. You are the only colleague who did.

He struggles to loosen his cravat. Salieri does it for him.

SALIERI

I would never miss anything that you had written. You must know that.

MOZART

This is only a vaudeville.

SALIERI

Oh no. It is a sublime piece. The grandest operone. I tell you, you are the greatest composer known to me.

MOZART

Do you mean that?

SALIERI

I do.

MOZART

I have bad fancies. I don't sleep well anymore. Then I drink too much, and think stupid things.

SALIERI

Are you ill?

MOZART

The doctor thinks I am. But -

SALIERI

What?

MOZART

I'm too young to be so sick.

There is a violent knocking at the front door. Mozart starts and looks around wildly.

SALIERI

Shall I answer it?

MOZART

No! No, it's him!

SALIERI

Who?

MOZART

The man. He's here.

SALIERI

What man?

The knocking increases in loudness, terrifying Mozart.

MOZART

Tell him to go away. Tell him I'm
still working on it. Don't let him
in!

Salieri moves to the door.

MOZART

Wait! Ask him if he'd give me some
money now. Tell him if he would,
that would help me finish it.

SALIERI

Finish what?

MOZART

He knows. He knows!

Salieri leaves the room.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

Salieri goes to the front door and opens it to reveal
Schikaneder, who has obviously come straight from the theatre.
He still wears his bird make-up and under his street cloak,
his feathered costume is clearly seen. He has with him the
three actresses, also looking anxious and also in make-up as
the three attendants in The Magic Flute.

SCHIKANEDER

Herr Salieri.

SALIERI

Yes, I am looking after him.

SCHIKANEDER

Can we come in?

SALIERI

Well, he's sleeping now. Better not.

SCHIKANEDER

But he's all right?

SALIERI

Oh, yes. He's just exhausted. He
became dizzy, that's all. We should
let him rest.

SCHIKANEDER

Well, tell him we were here, won't
you?

SALIERI

Of course.

SCHIKANEDER

And say everything went wonderfully.
A triumph-de-luxe - say that! Tell
him the audience shouted his name a
hundred times.

SALIERI

Bene.

SCHIKANEDER

I'll call tomorrow.

SALIERI

Yes.

(to the actresses)

And congratulations to all of you.

It was superb.

ACTRESSES

Thank you! Thank you, Excellency!

Schikaneder produces a bag of money.

SCHIKANEDER

Oh, by the way, give him this. This is his share. That should cheer him up, eh?

SALIERI

Yes, indeed. Goodnight to you all now. It was perfection - truly!

ACTRESSES

(delighted)

Goodnight, Your Excellency.

Goodnight!

They bob and curtsey. Schikaneder stares at Salieri, uneasily, vaguely suspicious. Salieri smiles back at him and shuts the door. He stays for a moment, thinking. He contemplates the money.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

Mozart is sitting up in bed, staring at the door. It opens. Salieri returns. He holds in his hand the bag of money.

MOZART

What happened?

Salieri pours the coins out of the bag onto the coverlet.

SALIERI

He said to give you this. And if you finish the work by tomorrow night, he will pay you another hundred ducats.

Mozart looks at the coins astonished.

MOZART

Another? But that's too soon! Tomorrow night? It's impossible! Did he say a hundred?

SALIERI

Yes. Can I - could I help you, in any way?

MOZART

Would you? Actually, you could.

SALIERI

My dear friend, it would be my greatest pleasure.

MOZART

But you'd have to swear not to tell a soul. I'm not allowed.

SALIERI

Of course.

MOZART

You know, it's all here in my head. It's just ready to be set down. But when I'm dizzy like this my eyes won't focus. I can't write.

SALIERI

Then, let us try together. I'd regard it as such an honour. Tell me, what is this work?

MOZART

A Mass. A Mass for the Dead.

CUT TO:

INT. A SMALL DANCE HALL - BADEN - NIGHT - 1790'S

Trivial dance music is playing. Constanze is doing a waltz with a young OFFICER in military uniform. At the moment we see her, she stops abruptly, as if in panic.

OFFICER

What is it?

CONSTANZE

I want to go!

OFFICER

Where?

CONSTANZE

I want to go back to Vienna.

OFFICER

Now?

CONSTANZE

Yes!

OFFICER

Why?

CONSTANZE

I feel wrong. I feel wrong being here.

OFFICER

(laying a hand on her arm)

What are you talking about?

CUT TO:

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

Mozart is sitting up in bed, propped against pillows. The coins lie on the coverlet; many candles burn in the necks of bottles. Salieri, without coat or wig, is seated at an improvised worktable. On it are blank sheets of music paper, quills, and ink. Also the score of the Requiem Mass as so far composed. Mozart is bright-eyed with a kind of fever. Salieri is also possessed with an obviously feverish desire to put down the notes as quickly as Mozart can dictate them.

MOZART

Where did I stop?

SALIERI

(consulting the
manuscript)

The end of the Recordare - Statuens
in parte dextra.

MOZART

So now the Confutatis. Confutatis
Maledictis. When the wicked are
confounded. Flammis acribus addictis.
How would you translate that?

SALIERI

Consigned to flames of woe.

MOZART

Do you believe in it?

SALIERI

What?

MOZART

A fire which never dies. Burning one
forever?

SALIERI

Oh, yes.

MOZART

Strange!

SALIERI

Come. Let's begin.

He takes his pen.

SALIERI

Confutatis Maledictis.

MOZART

We ended in F Major?

SALIERI

Yes.

MOZART

So now - A minor. Suddenly.

Salieri writes the key signature.

MOZART

The Fire.

SALIERI

What time?

MOZART

Common time.

Salieri writes this, and continues now to write as swiftly and urgently as he can, at Mozart's dictation. He is obviously highly expert at doing this and hardly hesitates. His speed, however, can never be too fast for Mozart's impatient mind.

MOZART

Start with the voices. Basses first.

Second beat of the first measure -

A.

(singing the note)

Con-fu-ta-tis.

(speaking)

Second measure, second beat.

(singing)

Ma-le-dic-tis.

(speaking)

G-sharp, of course.

SALIERI

Yes.

MOZART

Third measure, second beat starting on E.

(singing)

Flam-mis a-cri-bus ad-dic-tis.

(speaking)

And fourth measure, fourth beat - D.

(singing)

Ma-le-dic-tis, flam-mis a-cri-bus ad-dic-tis.

(speaking)

Do you have that?

SALIERI

I think so.

MOZART

Sing it back.

Salieri sings back the first six measures of the bass line. After the first two measures a chorus of basses fades in on the soundtrack and engulfs his voice. They stop.

MOZART

Good. Now the tenors. Fourth beat of the first measure - C.

(singing)

Con-fu-ta-tis.

(speaking)

Second measure, fourth beat on D.

(singing)

Ma-le-dic-tis.

(speaking)

All right?

SALIERI

Yes.

MOZART

Fourth measure, second beat - F.

(singing)

Flam-mis a-cri-bus ad-dic-tis, flam-
mis a-cri-bus ad-dic-tis.

His voice is lost on the last words, as tenors engulf it and take over the soundtrack, singing their whole line from the beginning, right to the end of the sixth measure where the basses stopped, but he goes on mouthing the sounds with them. Salieri writes feverishly. We see his pen jotting down the notes as quickly as possible: the ink flicks onto the page. The music stops again.

MOZART

Now the orchestra. Second bassoon
and bass trombone with the basses.
Identical notes and rhythm.

(He hurriedly hums
the opening notes of
the bass vocal line)

The first bassoon and tenor trombone -

SALIERI

(labouring to keep up)

Please! Just one moment.

Mozart glares at him, irritated. His hands move impatiently. Salieri scribbles frantically.

MOZART

It couldn't be simpler.

SALIERI

(finishing)

First bassoon and tenor trombone -
what?

MOZART

With the tenors.

SALIERI

Also identical?

MOZART

Exactly. The instruments to go with
the voices. Trumpets and timpani,
tonic and dominant.

He again hums the bass vocal line from the beginning, conducting. On the soundtrack, we hear the second bassoon and bass trombone play it with him and the first bassoon and tenor trombone come in on top, playing the tenor vocal line. We also hear the trumpets and timpani. The sound is bare and grim. It stops at the end of the sixth measure. Salieri stops writing.

SALIERI

And that's all?

MOZART

Oh no. Now for the Fire.
(he smiles)
Strings in unison - ostinato on all -
like this.

He sings the urgent first measure of the ostinato.

MOZART
(speaking)
Second measure on B.

He sings the second measure of the ostinato.

MOZART
(speaking)
Do you have me?

SALIERI
I think so.

MOZART
Show me.

Salieri sings the first two measures of the string ostinato.

MOZART
(excitedly)
Good, good - yes! Put it down. And
the next measures exactly the same,
rising and rising - C to D to E, up
to the dominant chord. Do you see?

As Salieri writes, Mozart sings the ostinato from the
beginning, but the unaccompanied strings overwhelm his voice
on the soundtrack, playing the first six bars of their
agitated accompaniment. They stop.

SALIERI
That's wonderful!

MOZART
Yes, yes - go on. The Voca Me.
Suddenly sotto voce. Write that down:
sotto voce, pianissimo. Voca me cum
benedictis. Call me among the blessed.

He is now sitting bolt upright, hushed and inspired.

MOZART
C Major. Sopranos and altos in thirds.
Altos on C. Sopranos above.
(singing the alto
part)
Vo-ca, vo-ca me, vo-ca me cum be-ne-
dic-tis.

SALIERI
Sopranos up to F on the second 'Voca'?

MOZART
Yes, and on 'dictis'.

SALIERI
Yes!

He writes feverishly.

MOZART

And underneath, just violins -
arpeggio.

He sings the violin figure under the Voca Me (Bars 7,8,9).

MOZART

(speaking)

The descending scale in eighth notes,
and then back suddenly to the fire
again.

He sings the ostinato phrase twice.

MOZART

(speaking)

And that's it. Do you have it?

SALIERI

You go fast!

MOZART

(urgently)

Do you have it?

SALIERI

Yes.

MOZART

Then let me hear it. All of it. The
whole thing from the beginning -
now!

The entire Confutatis bursts over the room, as Mozart snatches the manuscript pages from Salieri and reads from it, singing. Salieri sits looking on in wondering astonishment. The music continues right through the following scenes, to the end of the movement.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - WINTER NIGHT - 1790'S

A carriage is driving fast through the night. Snow lies on the countryside.

INT. THE CARRIAGE NIGHT - 1790'S

The carriage is filled with passengers. Among them Constanze and Karl, her young son. They are sleepless and sway to the motion of the vehicle.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

Mozart lying in bed exhausted, but still dictating urgently. We do not hear what he is saying to Salieri, who still sits writing assiduously. Mozart is looking very sick: sweat is pouring from his forehead.

EXT. A COUNTRY ROAD - WINTER NIGHT - 1790'S

The carriage, moving through the night, to the sound of the music.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

Mozart still dictating; Salieri still writing without stop.

EXT. VIENNA STREET - DAWN - 1790'S.

The carriage has arrived. Constanze and her son alight with other passengers. Postillions attend to the horses. She takes her boy's hand. It is a cold wintry dawn.

The music stutters to a close. End of the Confutatis.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - 1790'S

MOZART

Do you want to rest a bit?

SALIERI

Oh no. I'm not tired at all.

MOZART

We'll stop for just a moment. Then we'll do the Lacrimosa.

SALIERI

I can keep going, I assure you. Shall we try?

MOZART

Would you stay with me while I sleep a little?

SALIERI

I'm not leaving you.

MOZART

I am so ashamed.

SALIERI

What for?

MOZART

I was foolish. I thought you did not care for my work - or me. Forgive me. Forgive me!

Mozart closes his eyes. Salieri stares at him.

EXT. VIENNA STREET - WINTRY DAWN - 1790'S

Constanze and Karl approach along the cobbled street, hand in hand toward their house. Snow lies in the street.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN - 1790'S

Mozart lies asleep in the bed, holding the last pages of the manuscript. Salieri lies across from him on Karl's small bed in his shirt sleeves and waistcoat. The child's bed is obviously too small for him and he is forced in to a cramped position.

EXT. MOZART'S APARTMENT HOUSE - DAWN - 1790'S

Constanze and Karl arrive at the door. They enter.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAWN - 1790'S

It is as disordered as before, save that the table, previously littered with pages, is now completely bare. Constanze looks at it with surprise and enters the bedroom.

INT. MOZART'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - DAWN - 1790'S

Mozart is asleep in the bed. Salieri is dozing on the nearby child's bed. The room is full of the trailing smoke from guttering and guttered candles. Startled by Constanze's entrance and her young son, Salieri scrambles up. As he does so, he attempts to button his waistcoat, but does it ineptly, so that the vestment becomes bunched up, making him look absurd.

CONSTANZE

What are you doing here?

SALIERI

Your husband is ill, ma'am. He took sick. I brought him home.

CONSTANZE

Why you?

SALIERI

I was at hand.

CONSTANZE

Well, thank you very much. You can go now.

SALIERI

He needs me, ma'am.

CONSTANZE

No, he doesn't. And I don't want you here. Just go, please.

SALIERI

He asked me to stay.

CONSTANZE

And I'm asking you -

She notices a movement from the bed. Mozart wakes. He sees Constanze and smiles with real joy. Forgetting Salieri, she goes to her husband.

CONSTANZE

Wolfi, I'm back. I'm still very angry with you, but I missed you so much.

She throws herself on the bed.

CONSTANZE

I'll never leave you again. If you'll just try a little harder to be nice to me. And I'll try to do better, too. We must. We must! This was just silly and stupid.

She hugs her husband desperately. He stares at her with obvious relief, not able to speak. Suddenly she sees the manuscript in his hand.

CONSTANZE

What is this?

She looks at it and recognizes it.

CONSTANZE

Oh no, not this. Not this, Wolfi!
You're not to work on this ever again!
I've decided.

She takes it from his weak hand. At the same moment Salieri reaches out his hand to take it and add it to the pile on the table.

She stares at him, trying to understand - suspicious and frightened and at the same time unable to make a sound. Mozart makes a convulsive gesture to reclaim the pages. The coins brought by Salieri fall on the floor. Karl runs after them, laughing.

CONSTANZE

(to Salieri)

This is not his handwriting.

SALIERI

No. I was assisting him. He asked me.

CONSTANZE

He's not going to work on this anymore. It is making him ill. Please.

She extends her hand for the Requiem, as she stands up. Salieri hesitates.

CONSTANZE

(hard)

Please.

With extreme reluctance - it costs him agony to do it - Salieri hands over the score of the Requiem to her.

CONSTANZE

Thank you.

She marches with the manuscript over to a large chest in the room, opens it, throws the manuscript inside, shuts the lid, locks it and pockets the key. Involuntarily Salieri stretches out his arms for the lost manuscript.

SALIERI

But - but - but -

She turns and faces him.

CONSTANZE

Good night.

He stares at her, stunned.

CONSTANZE

I regret we have no servants to show you out, Herr Salieri. Respect my wish and go.

SALIERI

Madame, I will respect his. He asked
me to stay here.

They look at each other in mutual hatred. She turns to the
bed. Mozart appears to have gone to sleep again.

CONSTANZE

Wolfi?
(louder)
Wolfi?

She moves to the bed. The child is playing with the coins on
the floor. Faintly we hear the start of the Lacrimosa from
the Requiem. Salieri watches as she touches her husband's
hand. As the music grows, we realize that Mozart is dead.

CU, Constanze staring wide-eyed in dawning apprehension.

CU, Salieri also comprehending that he has been cheated.

The music rises.

CU, The child on the floor, playing with the money.

CUT TO:

EXT. STEPHEN'S CATHEDRAL - VIENNA - A RAINY DAY - 1790'S

The Lacrimosa continues through all of the following: a small
group of people emerges from the side door into the raw, wet
day, accompanying a cheap wooden coffin. The coffin is borne
by a gravedigger and Schikaneder in mourning clothes. They
load it onto a cart, drawn by a poor black horse. All the
rest are in black, also: Salieri, Von Swieten, Constanze and
her son, Karl, Madame Weber and her youngest daughter Sophie,
and even Lort, the maid. It is drizzling. The cart sets off.
The group follows.

CUT TO:

EXT. OUTSIDE THE CITY WALLS OF VIENNA - RAINY DAY - 1790'S

The group has already passed beyond the city limits following
the miserable cart. The Lacrimosa accompanies them with its
measured thread.

The drizzle of rain has now become heavy. One by one, the
group breaks up and shelters under the trees. The cart moves
on toward the cemetery, alone, followed by nobody, growing
more and more distant. They watch it go.

Salieri and Von Swieten shake hands mournfully, the water
soaking their black tall hats. Schikaneder is in tears.
Constanze is near collapse. Salieri moves to assist her, but
she turns away from him, seeking the arm of Cavalieri. Madame
Weber takes Karl's hand.

The music builds to its climax on Dona Eis Pacem! We CUT
back to:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING - 1823

Morning light fills the room. Old Salieri sits weeping

convulsively, as the music stops. Tears stream down his face.
Vogler watches him, amazed.

VOGLER

Why? Why? Why? Why add to your misery
by confessing to murder? You didn't
kill him.

OLD SALIERI

I did.

VOGLER

No, you didn't!

OLD SALIERI

I poisoned his life.

VOGLER

But not his body.

OLD SALIERI

What difference does that make?

VOGLER

My son, why should you want all Vienna
to believe you a murderer? Is that
your penance? Is it?

OLD SALIERI

No, Father. From now on no one will
be able to speak of Mozart without
thinking of me. Whenever they say
Mozart with love, they'll have to
say Salieri with loathing. And that's
my immortality - at last! Our names
will be tied together for eternity -
his in fame and mine in infamy. At
least it's better than the total
oblivion he'd planned for me, your
merciful God!

VOGLER

Oh my son, my poor son!

OLD SALIERI

Don't pity me. Pity yourself. You
serve a wicked God. He killed Mozart,
not I. Took him, snatched him away,
without pity. He destroyed His beloved
rather than let a mediocrity like me
get the smallest share in his glory.
He doesn't care. Understand that.
God cares nothing for the man He
denies and nothing either for the
man He uses. He broke Mozart in half
when He'd finished with him, and
threw him away. Like an old, worn
out flute.

EXT. CEMETERY OF ST. MARX - LATE AFTERNOON - 1790'S

The rain has eased off. A LOCAL PRIEST with two boy acolytes
is standing beside an open communal grave. Mozart's body is
lifted out of the cheap pine box in a sack.

We see that the grave contains twenty other such sacks. The gravedigger throws the one containing Mozart amongst the others. An assistant pours quicklime over the whole pile of them. The acolytes swing their censers.

LOCAL PRIEST

The Lord giveth. The Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

CUT BACK TO:

INT. OLD SALIERI'S HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING - 1823

OLD SALIERI

Why did He do it? Why didn't He kill me? I had no value. What was the use, keeping me alive for thirty-two years of torture? Thirty-two years of honours and awards.

He tears off the Civilian Medal and Chain with which the Emperor invested him and has been wearing the whole time and throws it across the room.

OLD SALIERI

Being bowed to and saluted, called 'distinguished - distinguished Salieri' - by men incapable of distinguishing! Thirty-two years of meaningless fame to end up alone in my room, watching myself become extinct. My music growing fainter, all the time fainter, until no one plays it at all. And his growing louder, filling the world with wonder. And everyone who loves my sacred art crying, Mozart! Bless you, Mozart.

The door opens. An attendant comes in, cheerful and hearty.

ATTENDANT

Good morning, Professor! Time for the water closet. And then we've got your favourite breakfast for you - sugar-rolls.

(to Vogler)

He loves those. Fresh sugar-rolls.

Salieri ignores him and stares only at the priest, who stares back.

OLD SALIERI

Goodbye, Father. I'll speak for you. I speak for all mediocrities in the world. I am their champion. I am their patron saint. On their behalf I deny Him, your God of no mercy. Your God who tortures men with longings they can never fulfill. He may forgive me: I shall never forgive Him.

He signs to the attendant, who wheels him in his chair out of the room. The priest stares after him.

INT. CORRIDOR OF THE HOSPITAL - MORNING

The corridor is filled with patients in white linen smocks, all taking their morning exercise walk in the care of nurses and nuns. They form a long, wretched, strange procession - some of them are clearly very disturbed. As Old Salieri is pushed through them in his wheelchair, he lifts his hands to them in benediction.

OLD SALIERI

Mediocrities everywhere, now and to
come: I absolve you all! Amen! Amen!
Amen!

Finally, he turns full-face to the camera and blesses us the audience, making the Sign of the Cross. Underneath we hear, stealing in and growing louder, the tremendous Masonic Funeral Music of Mozart.

On the last four chords, we

FADE OUT:

THE END